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An Inquiry into the Received Opin-
ions of Philosophers and Historians,
on the Natural progress of the Hu-
man race from Barbarism to Civiliza-
tion, by J.R. Poinsett

A Biographical Sketch of the

Hon. Joel R. Poinsett

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AN
INQUIRY

INTO
THE RECEIVED OPINIONS
OF
PHILOSOPHERS AND HISTORIANS,
ON
THE NATURAL PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN RACE
FROM
BARBARISM TO CIVILIZATION.

READ
ON THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
Literary and Philosophical Society,


BY THE PRESIDENT, J. R. POINSETT.

MAY 14, 1834.



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AN INQUIRY

INTO THE RECEIVED OPINIONS OF PHILOSOPHERS AND HISTORIANS;
ON THE NATURAL PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN RACE FROM
BARBARISM TO CIVILIZATION.

In addressing the Society on the celebration of their Anniversary, it would seem most fitting to confine myself to those subjects which naturally present themselves on such an occasion, and to treat only of the nature of this institution, its rise and progress, the moral effects it has produced or is likely to give rise to, its present condition and future prosperity. It would be a pleasing task to show the character and object of institutions like this, whose establishment we have this evening met to celebrate; to dwell upon the merits of those persons to whose praise-worthy exertions we are indebted for its existence; and especially to eulogise the memory of one to whose philosophical mind and rare attainments, this Society and this Community owe so much.*

It would have been gratifying to have explained the great moral effects, similar institutions have produced in every Country in which they exist, and their vast importance, not only in promoting the progress of learning; but in preventing its decline; to have traced the intimate connection between the rise and fall of Science and Literature and the independence and prosperity of Nations, and to have shown, that States have

*The late Mr. STEPHEN ELLIOTT

been exalted or debased, in proportion as Science and Literature flourished or decayed. But as these topics have been already treated with great ability on previous occasions, I shall follow the example of those Gentlemen, who have preceded me since the revival of the Society under its present useful regulations, and treat a subject, which although less interesting, will be more novel to my hearers. Confining myself in the first instance, to a very few observations on the present condition of this Institution.

THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH-CAROLINA, was fast fading into insignificance. It is difficult to say from what cause this arose; but the members seldom met together, and there was no common union of effort to advance any one branch of Science. A choice collection of objects of natural history were perishing from neglect in useless obscurity; and the excellent works we possessed upon that and other subjects, were suffered to remain untouched on their shelves. The public in general were almost ignorant of our existence, as a Literary Society, and indeed we had little more than the name. When in 1831, the institution was revived with its present useful organization by the judicious efforts of a Gentleman,* who has already done much to promote the cause of learning, of morality, and religion. Since that period its progress has been rapid; and it now bids fair to rival in usefulness similar institutions in our sister States.

The dissertations and essays read at our monthly meetings are calculated not only to extend our knowledge of the intellectual, and moral phenomena of human life, and of all the varied branches of Science and Literature:

*MR. THOMAS S. GRIMKE.

but to inspire in youthful minds a desire to cultivate their faculties by diligent study, as the purest source of enjoyment as well as the best means of acquiring enduring and substantial fame.

The study of Natural History in which the class particularly dedicated to that branch of Science has made such rapid progress is one of the most delightful the mind can pursue,

————— “This goodly frame
Of nature, touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men.”

And that of the student of this branch of Science is constantly awakened to the most interesting aspects of life and nature. The Naturalist who observes the beauty and order of all the wondrous works of the Creator, and traces them from nature up to nature's God, derives from their contemplation, gratifications of the noblest and most elevated kind. To him the words of the poet apply with great truth.

The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise.

Let not those who have devoted themselves to severer studies and pursuits, condemn these as unworthy and frivolous. There is no Science divested of practical utility, and that of Natural History has been cultivated by some of the ablest men of ancient and modern times. The gentlemen, who have devoted themselves with so much zeal to this branch, will leave a monument of their usefulness in the valuable additions they have made to the collections, belonging to the Society, and in the important discoveries by which they have illustrated the natural history of their own state.

The class, which has dedicated its labours, to trace the history of South-Carolina, has been usefully and we believe successfully employed. From their laborious researches we may hope for a correct history of this interesting portion of our common Country from its earliest settlement to the present day. It is important to the cause of truth, to trace the rise and progress, of a people who fled from religious and political persecution to take shelter in another world, and who by the energy of their character, their indomitable will and stern determination to live and die free, overcame all the obstacles opposed to their progress by the climate, the savage inhabitants of the country, and the impolitic regulations of the nation which claimed dominion over them, and laid the foundation of this great and flourishing Republic. The beginning of the history of all other nations is lost in the obscurity of fabulous tradition; but the dawn of our first existence as a nation is still visible; and all the signs and phenomena of our early settlement, sufferings, progress and final security as a member of a great and powerful confederacy are distinctly to be traced, and we hope through the indefatigable industry and learning of this class of our Society, will be faithfully recorded.

We count among our members, men who have devoted themselves successfully to the study of Physies, and who are not only themselves well acquainted with the present systems of Philosophical and Physical knowledge, but are imbued in a distinguished manner with the faculty of imparting that knowledge to others. They have established among us institutions, where the Student may receive instruction in every branch of Science, more advantageously in some respects, than in any other Colleges in the United States. These individuals are entitled to

the gratitude, and will I hope, receive the support of an enlightened and liberal public.

We count among our members very many, who have successfully cultivated a taste for Literature. It has been happily said, "that polite letters allure the mind into the neighbourhood of the Sciences," not only is this true, but as it is the sole instrument of spreading the benefits of Science among men, on its cultivation depends the progress of all useful knowledge. I will even go farther, and assert my belief, that with our habits and under our government, the liberties of the people depend on the cultivation of letters. In this country, we are accustomed to speak and to write freely—to examine fearlessly every matter human and divine; to utter boldly the most decisive opinions; to participate ourselves in the administration of the laws, and to watch jealously over the conduct of our public officers, and it is only by the general diffusion of knowledge, and by the cultivation of our reasoning faculties, that we can be fitted to discharge these important duties and to maintain the sacred principles of justice and freedom. "It is odd," says Addison, "to consider the connection between despotic government and ignorance, and how the making one person more than man, makes the rest less—Riches and plenty are the natural effects of liberty, and where these abound, learning and all the liberal arts will immediately lift up their heads and flourish—Ease and plenty are the great cherishers of knowledge; as most of the despotic governments of the world have neither of them, they are naturally overrun with ignorance and folly."—These remarks are true, but the author might have gone farther and added that where Science and Literature are cherished despotism cannot long maintain its dominion. [Learning brings men on a level with each other; we cannot re-

gard any man as our superior who does not excel us in acquirements and wisdom; a sentiment which tends more than any other to foster and preserve among us those feelings of equality and moral pride which form the bulwark and safeguard of civil and religious liberty. Our institution deserves therefore the patronage of the enlightened citizens of a republic. It tends to develop the faculties of those who compose its members, to afford instructive amusement to those persons who will seek it here; to illustrate the natural, civil and political history of our country; and to inspire among all classes a taste for Literature and the Arts; those refined and pure enjoyments which soften and humanize the hearts of men and bring more precious and permanent accessions to human happiness than all the gratifications which power and wealth can command.

Every one who has pursued any Philosophical enquiry with a sincere desire to arrive at truth, must have observed, that it is fatal to his object to set out with striving to maintain a favorite theory. It will be found on investigating the subject, that the whole history of Physics is full of hypotheses which arose from misconception, and that their obstinate maintenance has operated as a material obstruction to the progress of genuine Science.—There is a natural tendency in the mind of man to see in every phenomenon of nature some confirmation of preconceived opinions, and he cannot resist the temptation to misrepresent or to distort facts so as to bend and suit them to his own theories, and Locke has said, “such is the condition of man that it is necessary to unlearn and correct the errors of Philosophers and Historians, in order to enlarge the circle of knowledge.”

There is one error, as it appears to me, of the Historian and Philosopher, which has frequently been the sub-

ject of my reflections, while exploring the steppes and deserts of Asia, or wandering over the pampas and prairies of America, and I shall submit to you the result of these reflections, and bring to your view the facts on which they are founded, the more readily, because I regard the subject as one of the most important that can occupy the Naturalist, Historian, or Philosopher. It cannot be doubted that to a reflecting mind, the wisdom and superintending providence of God, are manifested in the meanest worm that crawls upon the earth, as well as in the heavens which declare his glory, and the firmament which showeth his wondrous works, yet, of all created beings, man is the most perfect, and whether we regard his form and reasoning, his character and customs, his wonderful structure and astonishing intellectual faculties, we cannot but consider him, as presenting to a Philosophic mind, the most varied, the most interesting and the most important topics of study.

In every essay on civil society and in every modern history of the progress of the human race, the fact is assumed, that in all countries mankind were originally hunters and fishers; that the destruction of game and consequent scarcity of food led to the adoption of different habits, and compelled them to tame the animals which they formerly preyed on, and to become shepherds—that a still augmenting population, by driving the inhabitants into comparatively narrower limits and depriving them of pasturage for the extensive flocks and herds necessary for the maintenance of man in that state of society, forced them to the pursuits of agriculture through which they attained the highest degree of civilization. This conclusion has always appeared to me to be erroneous, whether we regard the proofs furnished by sacred or profane history, or whether we examine the actual

condition of the hunter and Shepherd tribes; they afford satisfactory evidence, that the hunting and fishing Tribes unless mixed with other races of men remain so always, and, that Shepherds although fond of war, and frequently conquerors, have never as a people abandoned their pastoral condition. They appear to have obeyed the law given to the *Rechabites*, "neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; neither ye nor your sons forever; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents." Gibbon indeed tells us of a Tribe of the Huns who abandoned the pastoral life of their ancestors, and became a civilized and agricultural people: a change which he attributes to the mildness of the climate and their long residence in the fertile province to which they emigrated; but without intending to do so, he accounts very satisfactorily for this change in their condition and mode of life, by informing us that previous to this advance in civilization, they became white—now it is certain, that neither climate nor long residence in a fertile and flourishing province, could have produced any great change of complexion. This is only to be accounted for by their intermarrying with a nobler race, among whom they dwelt, and whose agricultural habits their children inherited.

The condition of the Patriarchs as recorded in holy writ, has been quoted to show, that one of the earliest conditions of man, was the pastoral state, and that their immediate descendants, became in a short period of time Agriculturists, dwellers in houses and inhabitants of cities. But the different members of the family of our first parents are represented to have followed different pursuits. Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground, and pastoral and agricultural labours, were conducted by the same individuals. in the days of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham possessed flocks and herds; but he fed his heavenly guests with bread, and when he cast forth Hagar and his first born Ishmael, "he took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto her." On the death of his wife Sarah, he purchased a place to bury her in, for four hundred shekels of silver, which is at variance with the customs of the pastoral Tribes. Isaac had not only possession of flocks and possession of herds, and great store of servants, but he sowed the land which was given to him by Abimelech and which by the blessing of the Lord, yielded him in the same year an hundred fold, and when deceived by the device of Rebecca he blessed Jacob as his first born, after partaking of the savoury meat he loved, he prayed "that God would give him of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of *corn* and *wine*." And the Lord did bless Jacob with abundance of cattle and corn, for he appeased his brother Esau with a present of Goats and Sheep and Camels and Kine, and fed him with bread, and when he pitched his tent before Shalem, a city of Shechem, he paid one hundred pieces of silver for the parcel of a field whereon he dwelt. Again, in the beautiful and affecting story of Joseph and his brethren, it is written, that Joseph dreamed, that when he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, his sheaf arose and stood upright, &c. showing that their occupations were Agricultural, and again, when the famine was over the face of the earth, Jacob said unto his sons, "Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt, get thee down thither and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die." All these transactions and especially the last exhibit the customs of a people superior to the Shepherd state, familiar with commerce and the use of

money, and dependant for their subsistence upon the products of Agriculture.

If we compare the records of Ancient history with the present condition of the pastoral tribes of Asia, we shall find, that Shepherds although fond of war and frequently conquerors, and founders of new Dynasties, have never as a people abandoned their pastoral condition; and that the Sythian Tribes—the Tartars, Mongols and Manchours, who overrun the greatest part of Asia and conquered Empires, returned to their beloved plains and wild and wandering life, and under the name of Tartars, Mongols, Calmucs, Bashkirs, Kurds and Turcomans people the banks of the Volga, and the shores of the Caspian Sea, and extend over the vast Steppes and Deserts of Asia to Siberia and the walls of China. These Tribes are to be seen at the present day wandering over the countries indicated, and which they have inhabited from time immemorial, exhibiting the same characteristic manners and customs, as are ascribed to them by Herodotus the father of profane history. The Tartar Shepherds of the Steppes of Russia possess all the attributes of the wandering Scythians—The same physical construction, the same nomadic life, the same habitations and the same customs, slightly modified by the religion they now profess. I have seen them moving from station to station, with their small conical tents placed upon low wheels, the women and children and the aged and infirm, seated upon the same car dragged slowly over the plain by oxen, accompanied by the men on horseback, driving along their flocks and herds, and in this manner, the Scythians are described roaming over their immeasurable wilds in search of water and fresh pasturage.

Gibbon represents the Huns as the vassals, the enemies, and sometimes the conquerors of the Chinese Em-

pire—But we know from him and from other authorities, that they evacuated the conquered territory and returned to their wandering and predatory mode of life. After the first conquest they exacted an annual tribute as the price of withdrawing from the Country. Among other things stipulated for, were a certain number of maidens. These were chosen from among all classes, and even women of the highest rank were not exempt from this pollution. “The situation of these unhappy victims,” says Gibbon, “is described in the verses of a Chinese Princess, who laments that she has been condemned by her parents to a distant exile, under a barbarian husband. She complains that sour milk is her only drink, raw flesh her only food, and a tent her palace; and she expresses in a strain of pathetic simplicity, the natural wish that she were transformed into a bird, that she might fly back to her dear country; the object of her tender and perpetual regret.”—And in subsequent conquests of that Empire, the great body of the Conquerors evacuated the Country, and those who remained are to this day an inferior race, far behind the Chinese in knowledge and refinement.

The chief reason of the immutable condition of these people is to be found, in the invincible repugnance of mankind, to submit to the restraints imposed by the labour of Agricultural pursuits, a repugnance only to be overcome by absolute want. Now the pastoral Tribes possess a never failing supply of food and raiment—They eat the flesh and drink the milk of their flocks and herds, and clothe themselves, with their skins and fleeces, which furnish likewise the material for constructing their habitations. Even their fuel consists of the dried dung of their cattle. All their wants are supplied with little labour, and there is at no time a scarcity of coarse food in a Mongol or Tartar camp. Contented therefore and

without concern for their future subsistence, they love their free and wandering life, and live surrounded by a superior race, in possession of all the comforts of civilized life, not only without envying their condition but actually commiserating them for the restraint under which they live. They cannot comprehend any enjoyment or even comfort in countries where men live in Cities, and where the plains are intersected by enclosures, and the cattle confined to one spot. I passed a night in the tent of one of their chiefs, who was curious to know, how the civilized European contrived to live. He had heard of the French—the name of Napoleon was at that time familiar to their ears. They regarded him as the Attila, Zingis or Tamerlane of the Europeans, and he therefore directed his inquiries to the manners and customs of that nation which acknowledged him as their chief. I explained to him in the best way I could, the manner of living in France and the comforts and enjoyments of civilized life. When I had concluded he asked me if the French people had any steppes to pasture their cattle on, and the liberty to change their abode and roam with them over as great a space as I had travelled over, to reach his camp. When I told him they had not; that their fields were divided off by enclosures, which marked every individuals property. He rose up suddenly, and with an air of triumph ejaculated repeatedly—They have no steppes! poor people they have no steppes! This Savage, who a little before had regaled me with a singed sheep's head, which seated on a mat in a small low tent, we pulled to pieces with our fingers, and washed down with curds dissolved in water, pitied the luxurious Frenchman who eats the most delicate food, and drinks the choicest wines and lives in a palace, because he has no steppes, and is compelled to pasture his cattle within en-

closed fields! There is no hope that men having such a sense of superiority over their more civilized brethren, and who can subsist upon the flesh and clothe themselves with the fleece, and house themselves with the skins of their countless flocks and herds, while they roam free and unrestrained over the boundless plains around them, will ever submit to the toilsome and patient persevering industry of the Agriculturist.

It is extremely difficult to trace the fate of the Hunting and Fishing Tribes in Europe. Cæsar in the short account he gives of the ancient Germans, represents them at first as a people addicted to hunting, but subsequently says that they possessed cattle, and neglecting agriculture, lived chiefly on milk, cheese and flesh.—Tacitus who has left us the most instructive work on the manners and customs of the Germans, agrees in substance with Cæsar; but both these Authors, although evincing great discernment and talent for observation have fallen into the error of describing as one nation, tribes of people who notwithstanding their vicinity were essentially dissimilar in all their characteristics, he says that their whole life was addicted to hunting and war. Cæsar speaks of them as hunters and nothing else, and shortly after tells us, that they lived on the produce of their tame cattle. Tacitus in his general outline of the institutions and customs of the ancient Germans describes a people superior to the hunter and shepherd state: but in particularizing the different tribes and giving a more minute account of the several states which constitute Germany, he describes nations having but slight relations to each other. In the general outline we perceive the first commencement of the institutions of Feudalism and Chivalry—The right of carrying arms was conferred publicly upon the candidate, and those who had distinguished themselves

by superior courage and enterprize, were followed by retainers bound to defend and succour them in the heat of action, and in the hour of danger, and to make their own actions subservient to their leader's renown. The chief, says Tacitus, *fights for victory, his followers for their chief*. In times of peace at home these bands sought a more active life, in the service of other states engaged in war. The Chief showed his liberality and the follower expected it, his table however inelegant was plentiful, and war and depredation were the only means he possessed to satisfy the wants of his followers; although the custom existed of presenting annual contributions of corn and cattle to their Chieftains. Robertson in his history of Charles the Fifth, has drawn a parallel between the ancient Germans and the North American Indians; but in reality there is no similarity, either in their institutions or character. The only modern people who resembled them, are their celtic desendants, the Highlanders of Scotland. The German Prince described by Tacitus, with his band of free companions, resembled very much a Highland Chief at the head of his clan. Besides, that Cæsar and Tacitus described each of them different Nations, they wrote at distinct periods; the account of the Germans by the former, is nearly one hundred years earlier than that of the latter. The early Commentators were much at a loss to reconcile the accounts given by these two great writers, and proposed to change the text of Tacitus, whenever the sense is at variance with the descriptions of Cæsar. But Tacitus does not differ from Cæsar so much as from himself. In his general observations, he describes a people indolent, slothful, and debauched, hunting only for their amusement, having extensive flocks and herds, and neglecting Agriculture, although not entirely without it; fond to

excess of Gambling and of War; possessing free institutions themselves; but having slaves to cultivate the earth, who were not employed in household duties, but lived apart and paid their owner a tribute in corn, cattle and clothing—possessing no skill to plant orchards or enclose meadows or to irrigate gardens; and demanding of the earth corn alone. This proves that they united Agriculture, however rude, with Pasturage. In his more particular descriptions of the several Tribes, he speaks of some that were Agricultural as the Cimbrians, others like the Sarmathians, living on horseback and in wagons, in all probability purely pastoral, and others again like the Fennians, in the lowest stage of Society, subsisting on wild herbs and roots, and the precarious produce of the chase. Both Cæsar and Tacitus mention the emigration of the Gauls into those countries, and both admit them to have been a superior race to most of the German Nations. It is probable therefore, that the hunting and fishing Tribes of Germany, shared the fate of the same class in America, and perished before the advance of civilization, while the pastoral and agricultural Tribes, spread their conquests over the greater part of Europe.

The state of civil Society on this continent, at the period of its first discovery and the changes it has undergone, are worthy the attentive consideration of the Philosopher and Historian, and afford an instructive lesson to those who will bring to its examination a spirit of impartiality and truth.

The inhabitants of that portion of America which extends from Hudson's Bay to the Gulph of Mexico, were found in the Hunter state. They had no idea of improving their condition by taming the wild animals which abounded in their forests and plains: and they supported a precarious existence by the chase. As they

are described by the early settlers, so are they now with very slight changes, inseparable from their vicinity to a superior race, and the bad habits they have acquired from those who ought to have set them a better example. An able writer who has treated of this subject, says "that the American Tribes are remarkable with respect to one branch of their history, that instead of advancing, like other nations, towards the maturity of society and government, they continue in their original state of hunting and fishing Tribes—a case so singular rouses our curiosity, and we wish to be made acquainted with the cause." He then states that it is not the want of animals capable of being domesticated, that obliges them to remain hunters and fishers; and seeks to account for this singular phenomenon, as he believes it, by the paucity of inhabitants in proportion to the extent of country they occupied, which afforded them ample room to maintain themselves by the pursuits of the chase. With Buffon, he thinks it is in a great measure to be attributed to the circumstance of the American Indian being much feebler than the inhabitants of the old world. Buffon ascribes the paucity of inhabitants in this country, to two causes: the first, that America was peopled much later than any other portion of the Globe, and in the next place, the infecundity of the Indian, founded on the conjecture, that man and all animals are much more feeble in America than in other quarters of the world. This theory and these reasons are entirely overthrown by the accounts which have been handed down to us of the dense population which covered the face of the country in Peru and Mexico when they were first discovered. In my opinion, the cause of the difference in the population of the upper and lower districts of America, is to be found in their distinctive habits and pur-

suits. The numbers of the hunting and fishing Tribes, did not even bear any proportion to the means of subsistence the country afforded to a people who lived by these means. These vast regions abounded in wild animals, fish and fowl—but hunters are an improvident and indolent race; only to be roused from their listlessness by hunger or the love of war, an innate and powerful passion in the breast of the Savage. Both these causes exert a powerful influence in checking the increase of population; which depends not only upon an abundant, but a certain supply of food, never found among hunters even in new countries abounding in every variety of game; and upon the existence of peace and security from lawless attacks upon life and property. These people on the contrary were constantly engaged in war and rarely possessed a few days supply in advance. There is no instance on record of their having blended the Shepherd with the Hunter. Even now the unmixed Indians are purely hunters, and the only domestic animal they prize is the horse, which so essentially aids them in the chase and in war. The early discoverers found that they were acquainted in a slight degree with Agriculture, and cultivated *Maiz* or Indian Corn. This duty was performed by the women. Their love for their offspring, and their natural compassion for the weak, the aged and infirm, led them to cultivate the earth. The mother could not wait the hunter's uncertain return from the forest with his spoil, to feed her craving infant; her natural affections urged her to labour, and in this manner a rude sort of husbandry grew up, and was found to exist among these Tribes. Their passage from the hunter to the agricultural state, appears therefore more easy and more natural than to the pastoral state, and much more probable, than from that interme-

mediate stage of Society. The hunter Tribes suffer cruelly from famine, whereas Shepherds have an abundant supply of food from the milk of their Cows and Ewes, and the flesh of their flocks and herds.

It is to be feared from past experience, that not even the most urgent necessity can ever drive the free hunter of our forest from his indolent habits. They have proved untamable, and have either retired before the improvements introduced by the whites, or have perished near them. Take for instance any one State, Virginia or Massachusetts. The confederacy of Indians in the midst of which the first feeble Colony of Virginia was placed, was the most numerous on the Continent, formed of thirty powerful Tribes, and numbering within a small space, Twenty-five Hundred Warriors, besides the countless Tribes that filled up the back country—and yet by the Census of 1830, there were in the whole State of Virginia, only forty-seven Indians.

In Massachusetts, of the numerous and warlike Tribes which rendered the early Colonization of that State a work of so much toil and danger, none are left, and the history of the desperate struggles of the early settlers with the original proprietors of the soil, appears almost fictitious. And in our own Carolina, what has been the fate of the Aborigines? A miserable remnant of the Catawbias is all that remains of the numerous and warlike Tribes which once peopled our native forests.

The inhabitants of the Islands first discovered by Columbus, differed essentially from the red people of this portion of America. His son, Ferdinand Columbus, whose narrative contains the most authentic record of the life and voyages of that great adventurer, represents them to have subsisted chiefly by fishing from Island to Island, and upon the spontaneous productions

of a bountiful soil. They were found living in villages, in large and commodious huts, and having about them some of the conveniences of social life.

The Spaniards despatched into the interior to explore the country, recounted on their return, that they were hospitably received, and seated in chairs highly ornamented, while the natives assembled round them, doing them homage and presenting them with provisions. These people slept in hammocks made of cotton thread, spun from the cotton which grew spontaneously in those Islands, and cultivated Maiz and the Mandioc root; still their predominant habits were those of the hunting and fishing Tribes, and except in a few instances, where a greater state of civilization prevailed, they perished before the advance of a more civilized race. All the early accounts of the discoveries and conquests of the Spaniards in America, unite in describing the Caribees as a most ferocious race; they represent them to have been Hunters of Men, and to have carried off the more peaceful inhabitants of other Islands, to devour them. This story was most probably an exaggeration of the Spaniards, who were so irritated by the determined opposition of this people to their dominion, that they endeavoured to exterminate them, and by false representations of their atrocities, obtained permission, and were even encouraged by the Court of Spain, to hunt them like wild beasts, and to destroy and carry them away captive. The feeble, meek, and submissive inhabitants of the other Islands, fared no better. They too were compelled to work in the mines, and to till the earth for their cruel and relentless task masters. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, they had been free and independent, enjoying all the happiness of a life of repose in a delightful and fertile climate. In their simplicity, they believed their

visiters to be Gods—but they were soon taught to regard them as fiends in human shape. Enslaved and harassed, they pined after their forests, and seas, and mountain paths, and perished by hundreds and thousands, in sorrow and despair. Such was the horror this treatment inspired in the breasts of these Indians, that, when one of their Chiefs, who had been driven to revolt by cruelty, was stretched upon a bed of torture, and offered life and ease if he would embrace the faith and receive the Sacraments of the Christian religion, he asked if there were Spaniards in that Heaven which they promised him, and on receiving an affirmative reply, he mournfully shook his head—sternly preferring a cruel death, to life and eternity where such men dwelt. The decrees of the Kings of Spain and of the Council of Indies are full of humane provisions for the instruction and protection of this unhappy people; but the poor Indians could not comprehend how their temporal comfort could be promoted by making them bondsmen and labourers, or, their spiritual happiness secured, by teaching them to adore as the God of mercy, the Deity worshipped by the murderers and oppressors of their race.

Those among them who had no agricultural habits, dwindled away under this treatment. They perished under the shadow of the white man's tree, like criminals under that of the dreaded *Upas*. They did not resist like the Carribbeans, who were hunted with dogs, and destroyed as wild and noxious animals; but they pined away in hopeless misery, and welcomed death, which relieved them from their sufferings, and according to their superstitions, restored them to their friends and kindred, and left them free to roam over other and fairer Islands, in pursuit of never failing game.

The people who inhabited the Southern part of North

America, and the largest portion of the Southern Continent, were found at the period of their discovery, to be in a highly civilized state, and their records and traditions show them to have been so from time immemorial. They cultivated the earth with the utmost care and with the most perfect system of husbandry, known even at the present day; irrigating the land in situations far removed from water courses. The remains of Aqueducts and Canals for that purpose, prove them to have been of great extent, and denote considerable skill in hydraulics. Their Cities contained vast and magnificent edifices, and their bridges, high-roads and causeways were numerous, extensive and solidly constructed. Their Pyramids, at once their Temples and Sepulchres, are scarcely inferior in dimensions, to those of Egypt. They worked with great ingenuity in the precious metals, wrought and cut with extraordinary perfection the hardest stones, and had made great progress in Sculpture. They had moreover, a solar system, more perfect than that of the Greeks or Romans, and were governed by wise and wholesome laws. Hernando Cortez, who was enabled to subdue this numerous and civilized people, by taking advantage of their intestine divisions, as well as from their ignorance of the arms and mode of warfare of the invaders, in a series of letters addressed to Charles the Fifth, describes the condition of the Mexicans in terms, which appear exaggerated, and intended to enhance the value of his conquest. But the vein of simplicity which pervades these letters, stamps upon the statements they contain, the internal evidence of their truth and authenticity. He tells us, that in Cholula, the first large town he reached on his march into the interior, but a second rate city of the kingdom of Montezuma, he counted upwards of four hundred Towers and Temples; that the

fields in its vicinity were irrigated and in a high state of cultivation, that the whole country around was so thickly settled, that not a foot of land remained uncultivated; and notwithstanding all the care bestowed upon agriculture, such was the density of the population, that there was at times, a scarcity of bread corn; and it was not uncommon to see the poor asking alms of the rich in the streets, and from house to house, and shop to shop, "as they do," he says, "in Spain and in other countries, inhabited by a people possessed of reason." There is certainly no greater proof of an artificial condition of Society, than to see the poor asking alms in the streets. It is only in very old, long established, and thickly settled countries, that this is ever seen, and *Cortes*, in this short sentence has said more to confirm his account of the advanced state of civilization in which he found Mexico, than in all his laboured descriptions of the splendour and magnificence of the Court of Montezuma. The vast remains of their cities and temples and works of art, show conclusively that the conqueror by no means exaggerated the condition in which he found that country. In the Island of *Sacrificios*, so called because one of their great Temples was situated there, in which, they were said to have offered up human victims to their idols, there have been lately discovered vases of Alabaster of the most perfect workmanship and the chastest design; sculptured images of great beauty and among other things, masks of the human face, beautiful as the *beau ideal* of the Greek sculptors, having the same facial angle and embodied ideas of perfection. These are sculptured in Porphyry and other hard stones, and some of the finest are of *Obsidian*, (volcanic glass) a substance so hard and brittle, that it is incomprehensible how they could have wrought it with their instruments.

Within the present century, there was discovered in the province of Chiapas, the remains of an ancient city called Palenque, which must have been in ruins before the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish arms. Among them are vestiges of vast edifices built of hewn stone, and adorned in a peculiar and not inelegant style of architecture; and with sculptured stone figures, and *alto relievos* of a composition nearly as hard as stone, and which has resisted the action of the air for ages. Their huge pyramids of unburnt brick, and their walls built of large blocks of hewn stone, to be compared only to the Cyclopean walls of Ancient Etruria. I have myself seen and examined, and have traced the remains of edifices, which from the ground plan, still in a perfect state of preservation, must have been of sufficient dimensions to be the base of a building capable of containing five or six thousand persons—confirming the account given by Cortes, of his having been on several occasions lodged with all his troops, in one and the same building.

Garcilasso de Vega, descended from one of the Incas of Peru, by the mother's side, and by the Father's from a Captain among the conquerors, gives an account of the stupendous works of art erected by his ancestors, which is fully borne out by the magnificent remains still to be seen at Cuzco and other cities of upper Peru. He says, that the Indians of the low country, never could be tamed or taught to conform to the customs of civilized life, and that he had himself seen them in the streets of Carthagena without any cloathing, stalking after each other like so many Cranes. While he describes the inhabitants of the Mountain districts, as an highly civilized agricultural people. His account of the manners and customs, the polity and religion, the arts and scien-

ees of the ancient Peruvians are fully confirmed by the authentic records of the riches sent to Europe by the conquerors, by all contemporary statements, and by the remains of their aqueducts, bridges, high-roads, temples, and other public edifices, *as in Mexico*.

The religion of the Mexicans was bloody and atrocious, and yet its forms were such as could not have existed in a barbarous state of Society. The Priesthood were numerous, wealthy, and powerful, their temples vast and magnificently adorned with the most precious materials. Their influence over the people was so unbounded, that they reconciled them to the cruel ceremonies of a most degrading superstition. They propitiated their idols, types of war and desolation, by human victims. And such was the effect these bloody sacrifices, which were conducted with great pomp, had upon the imagination of the people, that they were with great difficulty won over to a milder form of worship; and even to the present day, in the Catholic Churches in the country, the Priests have been compelled to allow them to mingle Pagan ceremonies with those of the Christian Church.

The religion of the Peruvians was mild, and their form of worship innocent, consisting only of magnificent pageants and splendid ceremonies. Their Inca, a descendant of the Godhead, was at once the head of the Church and of the State, and this theocratic government presented one of the most complicated political institutions recorded in the history of mankind, and which would require too much time to explain here.—The present race of agricultural Indians, both in Mexico and Peru, are mild and submissive, humble towards their superiors, and remarkably courteous in their intercourse with each other.

In the account Columbus himself gave of the inhabitants of the Islands he first discovered, in a letter to the Spanish Minister, he describes them as having no form of worship among them, nor any idolatry; but seeming to have a firm persuasion that all force, power, and all good things, are from Heaven, from whence indeed says he, they imagined I had come down with my ships and sailors. In a subsequent letter, written from Española, on his second voyage he says that in all the chief places there was an uninhabited building set apart for worship in which were kept certain figures in relieve, called *Cemis*, in whose presence they performed strange ceremonies. He relates that on one occasion, the Spaniards entered suddenly one of these edifices, and in the midst of the confusion occasioned by their unexpected presence, they heard a great outcry proceeding from the *Cemis*, suspecting some fraud, they kicked it over and found a tube extending from the lower part of the figure, which was hollow, to the opposite corner of the room, where in the midst of darkness, and covered with bushes, they discovered an Indian, who it appeared was employed to give the responses of this oracular and mysterious image. The Cacique begged that they would not betray the secret to his people, as this deception enabled him to obtain from them whatever contributions he required. This, says Columbus in conclusion, looks very much like idolatry.

Cicero says, "there never was a people so rude, so savage, and so ignorant, as not to have their minds imbued with an idea of the existence of God. Many indeed have extravagant notions of the Deity; but all acknowledge the divine nature and power of the Godhead." I believe this to be true, and there is no doubt that the hunting Indians of our forests had some notions of natu-

ral religion and of the existence of a Supreme being; but their belief was vague and their superstitions monstrous and absurd.

The Shepherd Tribes of Asia being more advanced in civilization than the hunting and fishing Tribes of North and South America, all profess some religious tenets and have some form of public worship. Of these, the Tatars and the Tribes which inhabit the banks of the Caspian Sea, are Mahomedans, while the different Tribes of Mongols are worshippers of the Dalai Lama, whose Temple and abode are in Thibet.

This is the only instance in the world of a living man being worshipped as a Deity. When about to die, his place is supplied by a young boy, who is converted into a Godhead and High Priest by the inferior Lamas, themselves objects of great veneration to the people. I passed some days in the tent of one of these Lamas, on the banks of the Volga, in the midst of a horde of Calmucks, (a Mongol Tribe) and witnessed the respect and veneration with which he was treated. His tent was the temple of the horde. Opposite the entrance was an upright case, containing three ranges of small hideous molten images, the public *Lares* of the horde. Before these, a range of small cups was placed on a low stool, in which the smallest possible portion of the good things brought to the *Lama* by his devout flock, were offered to the Gods.

They possess likewise, painted images of their *Burchans*, but these are far inferior to the moulten, and I saw none of them in the tent of my Lama. Several flags were leaning up against the side of the tent. On each of them was painted the horse *Kimorin*, under which was written an appropriate selection of the Calmic ritual. Near them hung a cylinder fixed in a neat frame in

such a manner that it could turn on its axis. On the this Cylinder, were written sundry prayers in the *Tan-gotian* or sacred language. The good Priest observing my attention attracted by this machine, gave me a practical explanation of its uses. He took it from its peg, and placing himself very devoutly before the little moulten images, began to whirl it round with wonderful rapidity. After sometime passed in this exercise, he remarked, with an exulting smile, that he had the advantage over me and could pray in five minutes as much as I could in five years. This praying machine is called a *Kurada*. These compendious methods of offering up prayers to their gods, for the flags are agitated before them and in front of the Temple, give some idea of the civilization of these semi-barbarians—and yet the Calmucks possess some tincture of Literature. They are the Hindus of the wandering Tribes of Asia.

The condition of women in these different stages of society, and among the several nations whose character and peculiar habits have been examined, forms a very curious and interesting subject of inquiry. It will be found that in proportion as the hearts of men are softened, and humanized by civilization, the condition of the sex is ameliorated, until in the highest and most perfect state of society, they enjoy all the influence to which their virtues and amiable qualities entitle them.

In the Hunter state their condition is low indeed, scarcely above that of beasts of burthen. They may be seen among our Indian Tribes, with a child bound on their back, loaded with their own and their husbands pack, toiling after him through the woods, and when he throws himself down to repose labouring to construct the wigwam and to provide the scanty meal. And after obeying all the commands of her husband, and using her ut-

most efforts to please him, condemned to bear his ill humour and reproof. And yet this harsh treatment cannot destroy the kind and amiable feelings, which distinguish women in savage and civilized life. They are faithful companions and tender nurses, to their savage Lords, and the affection they display for their offspring, is touching and exemplary.

The authors who have treated on the manners and customs of the Indians in the Islands and on the continent of America, where a greater degree of civilization prevailed, have not given us much insight into this branch of our subject. In Mexico, on opening the tombs, I invariably found that implements for spinning and sewing had been buried with females, which showed that they were industrious house-wives. We know this circumstance to be an indication of their habits, because Warriors were interred with their weapons, and in the graves of children, the little skeletons were found in earthen jars, which contained whistles, rattles and other toys.

In Peru, the ladies enjoyed great freedom, and Garcilasso de Vega informs us. that when they visited each other, they either carried their work or asked the lady of the house for some. So that they too were an industrious race.

Among the Semi-barbarous pastoral tribes, the women are hewers of wood, and drawers of water. It may, to be sure, be considered too bold a figure of speech, to say, that they are hewers of wood where there are no forests; but the women in those countries, provide the fuel by kneading together the dung of their cattle with dry grass and making it into flat circular cakes, which are spread out in the sun to dry, and afterwards piled up near the tent for use. Among the Pastoral tribes women in all ages were drawers of water. I have often seen the

daughters of the Tartar Shepherds carrying their pitchers on their shoulders, like Rebecca the daughter of Bethuel; and employed as was that fair maiden when she met at the well the Ambassador of Abraham. In the Patriarchal ages women performed with their own hands all the household office of menial servants—Sarah was directed by Abraham to make ready quickly three measures of meal, kneed it and make cakes upon the hearth, to regale his heavenly guests—Rebecca drew water from the well, and poured it into a trough for the camels to drink, while Abraham's servant looked on as if he regarded it to be too degrading an office for man to perform. The Egyptians on the contrary, an agricultural people from time immemorial, treated their women, at the period we have just cited, with kindness, and respect. An eminent author who has written on this subject, says, "we shall almost constantly find women among savages condemned to every species of servile, or rather, of slavish drudgery; and shall as constantly find them emerging from this state, in the same proportion as we find the men emerging from ignorance, and brutality, and approaching to knowledge and refinement; the rank therefore and condition, in which we find women in any country, mark out to us with great precision the exact point in the scale of civil society, to which the people of such country have arrived; and were their history entirely silent on every other subject, and only mentioned the manner in which they treated their women, we would from thence be enabled to form a tolerable judgement of the barbarity or culture of their manners."

This is true to a certain extent only, women, among all civilized nations, are exempt from the slavish drudgery to which they are subjected in rude and savage communities. But they are not elevated to that moral con-

dition to which they are fitted by nature, except in those countries where the light of the Gospel has shed its benign influence, and the mild doctrines of Christianity are received. Among the Hindoos a highly civilized and learned people, they are regarded merely as objects of passion, and the favourite wife after being secluded all her life enjoys only the envied privilege of following her husband to the world of spirits, by burning herself on his funeral pile. Throughout the most civilized countries of the East, where women are treated with a show of great kindness and indulgence, they are bought and sold in the market and secluded in Harams.

I saw a man, a civilized man, accost another in the streets of Baku and invite him to come and see the women he had lately brought from the Mountains of Caucasus. They look a great deal better, said the merchant, than when you first saw them. I have fed them on meat and they are improved considerably in their appearance. These women are bought in the mountain districts, between the Caspian and Black seas, where they are distinguished for their personal charms. They are sold by their parents to dealers, who carry them to the chief cities of Persia and Turkey, and dispose of them to furnish the Harams of the wealthy—and yet it cannot be denied that the Turks and Persians are in an advanced state of civilization.

Among the Afghauns, where a system of compensations exists in the administration of justice, that which is most usually awarded in serious cases, consists in a certain number of young women: as for example, for a murder, twelve young women, six with portions and six without—a portion being about thirty dollars. For cutting off a hand, an ear, or a nose, six women; for breaking a tooth, three women; for a wound above the forehead, one.—

The price of the women is fixed in money, which the person wronged may take if he prefers it. Women seem to be selected as the most valuable or the most saleable species of marketable commodity. And yet the Afghauns are remarkable, among Eastern Nations, for their civilization and for their kindness and attachment to the sex. Mr. Elphinstone says of them, that they are the only people of the East, where he had seen any traces of the sentiment of love, according to our ideas of the passion, and they are not only a brave, a virtuous and a free people, but in many respects superior to the neighbouring Nations, who have exchanged independence for despotism.

The condition of the women in these countries, arises from the customs in the East, and their religious precepts permitting them to be considered and treated as slaves, and sanctioning a plurality of wives among the the rich. Among the nations of the North of Europe, it has been different. The Goths and Visigoths, although supposed to be descendants of the Scythians, always treated their women with kindness and respect.

Tacitus gives us a pleasing picture of the domestic virtues of the German women, and of the intimate union which existed between husband and wife. The customs of the nation in that country, where virtuous manners effected more than good laws did elsewhere, prohibited a plurality of wives, and the virgin, when she married, limited all her desires and all her hopes of happiness in her husband. "*Unum corpus, unamque vitam, ne ulla cogitatio, ne longior cupiditas.*"

When these Northern nations spread themselves over the South of Europe, they carried with them their manners, and taught the vanquished to regard woman with kindness and indulgence. The institution of chivalry

likewise contributed greatly to ameliorate the condition of the sex in Europe. Its establishment converted them into objects of love and veneration, and they exercised an astonishing influence over those who had sworn on the altar, to protect them from wrong: but it is chiefly to the mild and just precepts of the Christian religion, that women owe the station they now hold among the civilized nations of Europe and America. Wherever the light of the gospel has penetrated, they are raised to the condition of responsible beings, and exercise a soothing and most beneficial influence upon Society.

Although among agricultural nations, the condition of women depends very much upon the degree of civilization, as well as upon the religion of the country, it is always preferable to that among the pastoral Tribes. Women are treated with kindness, deference and respect among all those people who are descended from the white and noble race of the Caucasus—a people who have constantly tilled the soil and subsisted upon the fruits of the earth, and among whom we meet with the passions and virtues of great souls. Whereas the Shepherd Tribes of Asia, whom Cuvier classes Zoologically, as Mongolian, are sensual, selfish and cruel, and insensible to the claims of woman, to their affection and regard. These people have from time immemorial, been distinguished by the same characteristics, and have followed the same pursuits. There is no record of the Caucasian race having risen by degrees from fishers and hunters to the pastoral state, and thence to the exercise of agriculture; nor is there any example of the Shepherd Tribes becoming civilized agriculturists. Both races appear unchanged by climate or situation, and unaffected by any other circumstance than intermixture with each other. The same may be said of the hunting and fishing

Tribes, which are as constant in their habits and as irreclaimable as the Shepherd race. In this instance, man resembles some other species of animals. In the Cordillera of the Andes are found the Llama, Guanaco, Alpaco, and Vicuña, all of them varieties of the same species. The Llama, as is generally known, is domesticated and serves as a beast of burthen over the rugged passes of its native mountains. The Guanaco may be tamed so as to eat out of the hand of its master; but cannot be made useful; while the Alpaco and Vicuña, whose fine and valuable wools have tempted the avarice of man, and induced him to exert every means which ingenuity could devise, to tame and domesticate them, are of so wild a nature, that they perish immediately in captivity. No specimens of them have ever been brought alive from the mountains where they are found.

In the Mountains of Daguestan, which skirt the Caspian sea, the inhabitants are agricultural, descendants of the Caucasian race. They descend into the plains in the Spring of the year, and till and sow the land; and then retire to the uplands, and from their Eyries in the mountains, they watch over the safety of their growing crops and ripening corn; prepared to unite at the first alarm, against the predatory bands of Scythians, who are always ready to profit by the industry of their more civilized neighbours, although never tempted to follow their example. When the grain is ripe for the sickle, the Lesgui Tatars assemble and descend into the plain, in military array, to reap the fruits of their toil. I passed through that country during the harvest time; Every labourer was armed, and when on the appearance of our little party, the alarm was given, the reapers shouted to each other and gathered together in bands, ready to do battle against the invader. They told us that they sel-

dom transported their wheat to the mountains without a contest. The Plains beyond them are inhabited by the wandering Tribes of Tatars.

In the Crimea, the beautiful and highly picturesque mountains which border the Black Sea, are inhabited by a race of fine looking men, Caucasians and agriculturists—while the plains beneath were peopled with Nomade Tribes; I say were, for they have disappeared before the impolitic regulations of the Russian Government. These Tribes had, from time immemorial, preserved their distinctive characters and pursuits.

It is impossible to imagine a nobler model of mankind than is presented by the civilized agriculturist of the Caucasus. The Circassian, Georgian, Imeritian and Mingrelian, are a tall, straight, clean limbed and active race of men, with high foreheads, straight or aquiline noses, large expressive eyes, and intellectual cast of countenance. The Shepherd race are on the contrary distinguished by their low retiring forehead, small turned up nose, narrow eyes, vacant expression of countenance, and ignoble appearance. From the accidental circumstance of the Emperor Alexander having ordered *levies* to be made among these people, in the remotest corners of his Empire, I saw an immense number of them marching towards the European frontier, where they arrived too late to take part in the contest against Napoleon.—Among them were Bashkirs, Kerguises, Calmucs, and Tatars, and all of them, without exception, were of the Mongolian race.

Since the French have occupied Algiers, they have discovered the Tribes of Berbers, who inhabit the mountains of the lesser Atlas from Tunis to the empire of Morocco, to be the ancient Numidians described by Sallust, unchanged in manners and customs, and as un-

civilized as they were at the period of the war of Jurgurtha, more than a century before the Christian era—and in the latest reports on the subject, we find that serious thoughts are entertained by Ministers of abandoning that Colony, from the utter impracticability of restraining or civilizing the surrounding Tribes.

The existence as a separate people of the Gipseys, who are seen wandering over England in great numbers, and under the name of Bohemians, Zingari, and Gitanos, are found in every part of the continent of Europe, illustrates, in a remarkable manner, the difficulties, if it does not establish the utter impracticability of changing the settled habits of certain races of men. The best authorities agree in tracing the origin of these people to Hindotan. Grellman, who has left the best work on the subject, gives a vocabulary of their language in order to show, that many of their words are Hindostanic; but is puzzled by others which he thinks are not so. Sir William Jones, however explains the difficulty, by showing them to be pure Sanscrit; scarce changed in a single letter. He supposes these wanderers to be a race of outcast Hindus, Banditti and Pirates, who probably landed in Africa on some predatory expedition; and from Egypt, whence their names of Egyptians or Gipseys, were driven or migrated into Europe. He says, that among the Troglodytes, near Thebes, there exist a people, having the same habits and the same features, complexion and cast of countenance as the Gipseys.—Others again derive their origin from Persia, and suppose that they wandered from the banks of the Oxus—and some call them Saracens and others Tartars. But whatever may their origin, they have preserved for centuries their vicious and vagabond habits in the midst of

the civilization of Europe, where their numbers amount to at least 800,000 or perhaps a million.

In England, their vagabond life renders them obnoxious to the punishment of the laws. They are the most despicable and degraded of the human race, hated and despised of men driven from parish to parish, and frequently punished, and often perhaps unjustly, for if any theft or depredation is committed in the neighbourhood of their camp, their vicinity is considered by the Magistrate as *prima facie* evidence of their guilt. How often have I seen a horde of these people, wandering listlessly on the high-roads in England, their whole property borne along with them on two or three asses; or encamped in some sequestered spot, seated round a fire and dressing the fowl they had, perhaps, purloined from some neighbouring roost; their swarthy features, miserable attire, and wretched condition, forming a strong and striking contrast to the ruddy complexions, neat substantial dress, and comfortable dwellings of the peasantry around them. And yet neither example, nor force, nor persuasion, can induce these people to abandon their wandering life, and submit to the restraints which industry imposes. If the theory contended for, were true, and man of every race naturally changed his habits from necessity, surely the Gipsy hordes that roam over Europe, would long e'er this have passed through all the intermediate changes, and have reached that point, where men settle themselves in one spot and repose under their own vine and fig-tree; but they may still be seen wandering over the face of the earth, distinguished in every country and under every clime, for the same unsettled habits and the same disregard of the rights of property, that have rendered them notorious and infamous, from the time they first made their appearance in Europe.

There is a difference in the physical conformation of the American Agriculturist and the Savage Hunter, although not so marked and striking as that which exists between the Caucasian and Mongolian races. It appears to me that they are distinct from both, and it is to be hoped that they will be examined by some Naturalist and classed Zoologically. It saves trouble to call them both Mongolian: but their habits as well as configuration prove them to be distinct classes of men from each other, if not from the European and Asiatic races.

The Mexicans, Peruvians, and Chilians, were agricultural nations: and although the descendants of the lowest classes only, survived the harsh treatment of their conquerors and still form the base of the population of those countries, they are a very superior race to the Mongol Tribes of Asia, and inferior only to the Caucasian. The hunting and fishing Tribes of this hemisphere, have preserved unchanged their manners and customs. The Guaraounoes who inhabit the Swampy branches of the Orinoco, still suspend their habitations on the trunks of the palm *Moriche*, and give themselves no concern to seek out a more eligible site; and the Tribes which wander along the banks of the Marañon, are unchanged from the period of the earliest exploration of that mighty river.

Of our own hunting Tribes, I regret to state, that they too have resisted the well directed efforts of humane and pious Christians to civilize and convert them. An effort is now making to preserve the remnant of this ill-fated race, by removing them beyond the Rocky Mountains: and so long as this barrier shall check the enterprise of our rapidly increasing population, the Indians may remain in safety in the land marked out for their retreat; but whenever our people pass beyond those moun-

tains, the hunting Tribes must retreat before the advance of civilization, or perish under the shade of the white man's settlements. All the attempts which have been made to educate and civilize even individuals of this race, both by the English and ourselves, have failed signally. In every instance, the red man has profitted by the earliest opportunity, to fly from the restraints of Society, and to return to his free and independent life.

An English Author treating on this subject says, "that even in the immediate neighbourhood of the Colonies, and where every exertion has been made for their improvement, that religious zeal and interested policy could dictate, no sensible progress has been effected.—The children of a whole Tribe have even been carefully educated in vain. The Algonquins, who have an establishment within thirty miles of Montreal, have the Scriptures explained to them in their own language; and are taught to read and write in their youth, by the zeal and attention of their Pastors; but notwithstanding these advantages, and though the establishment is nearly coeval with the colonization of the country, they do not advance towards a state of civilization; but retain their ancient habits, language and customs, and are becoming every day more depraved, indigent and insignificant." It may be supposed, that the English Protestant instructors failed from ignorance of the best mode of teaching, and impressing upon the minds of Savages the truths of the Christian religion; but Mr. Southey, in his history of the Brazils, informs us that the Catholic Missionaries were equally unsuccessful in their efforts to convert and civilize the Tupis, Tupayas and Boticudos. They could not even win the former from their Cannibalism; in illustration of this, he relates the circumstance of a Jesuit, having taught and catechised and instructed an old Bra-

zilian woman in the nature of Christianity; and as he supposed fully converted her and completely taken care of her soul; finding her one day sick, he asked her if she could eat any thing. Grandam, said he, (that being the word of courtesy by which it is usual to address old women in the Brazils) if I were to get you a little sugar now, or a mouthful of some of our nice things, which we get from beyond sea, do you think you could eat it. Ah! my Grandson! said the old convert, my stomach goes against every thing—there is but one thing which I think I could touch. If I had the little hand of a little tender Tapuya boy, I think I could pick the little bones;—but woe is me, there is nobody to go out and shoot one for me!

It would appear indeed, that the descendant of the civilized agriculturist, conforms himself more readily to the independent life of the hunter and shepherd, than the latter to the restraints of civilized life. The Canadian descendants of the French, who accompany the Indians in their hunting and trapping expeditions, are as uncivilized and as wild as their associates; and the inhabitants of the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, immediate and unmixed descendants of the Spaniards, possess all the habits of the shepherd race, except that their habitations are fixed.

I feel, that I have very inadequately performed the task I proposed to myself, when I commenced this discourse. To disprove the generally received opinion respecting the natural changes mankind undergo in their progress to the most perfect state of civil society. I perceived too late that this cannot be done in the limited compass of an essay.

There remains to be examined the history of the Empires founded, as is generally supposed by the Scythians,

or of the nations conquered and overrun by them;—to take a more extensive view of the manners and customs of the Gauls, the Celts and the Germans; to trace the progress of the Slavonians, and show what their habits have been from the period that we have had any knowledge of them; to examine the characteristic features of the different castes in Hindostan, where the races of men are kept distinct and apart by religious prejudice; and the small, black, and ill looking Jauts are found in the same village as the Rathore Rajpoots, a stout, handsome and noble looking race of men, differing from each other as essentially as the beautiful Arabian Courser from the common draught Horse—to investigate the progress towards civilization and the rise and fall of those nations which inhabit the vast regions subjected to Mahometism, and which once raised to the highest state of prosperity by commerce and agriculture, are now the abode of ignorance, slavery and misery. To trace the history of the wandering Beduins, who have desolated Syria and Palestine; and to compare the Arabs of the immeasurable deserts of Africa with the civilized Agriculturists of Egypt, with each other and with the different nations of the interior of that continent, lately explored and described by modern travellers; and above all, to examine more carefully the condition of the Tribes and Nations, which peopled the Americas at the time of their discovery, and of the changes they have undergone.

It is possible that in the course of further and more accurate investigation, instances may be found of nations having advanced to the highest civilization from the hunter or pastoral state, as they frequently have done from the lowest condition of Society in agricultural countries, The Indian of our forests now wields with dexterity the most perfect implements of the chase, and has laid

aside the awkward and inefficient ones he had been formerly accustomed to use; he prefers a warm comfortable blanket to a dress of bark or skins, and it would be but reasonable to suppose, that perceiving other and still greater advantages of civilization, he would be led to adopt them also; and that surrounded by circumstances which furnish so many comparisons unfavorable to Savage life, he would be induced to abandon his own unprofitable pursuits and imitate the arts of his neighbours. But as far as my researches and observations have hitherto extended, the pure and unmixed races of Hunters in America, have not made any progress in their social condition. In the countries discovered and conquered by the Spaniards, and in the Brazils, those Tribes are still wild and untameable; and from all the accounts we have of that portion of America, prior to the conquest, they have been so from time immemorial. They were early distinguished by the Spaniards as *Indios bravos*, warlike Indians, while the agricultural Tribes were called *Indios mansos*, or *tame Indians*, and there still is as great a difference between these two races as between the untamed Wolf and the domestic house Dog. There, as with us in the United States, they have preserved their old habits and have contracted merely the vices of their more civilized neighbours. There, as here, those who are encircled by civilization become vicious and degraded and dwindle so fast that they will soon be exterminated; while those who live beyond the frontier, or have retired before the advance of the white settler, are unchanged and appear unchangeable.

When I state these facts and draw these conclusions from them, I would not be understood as meaning to discourage the praise worthy efforts of those pious and charitable persons, who are striving to convert and civi-

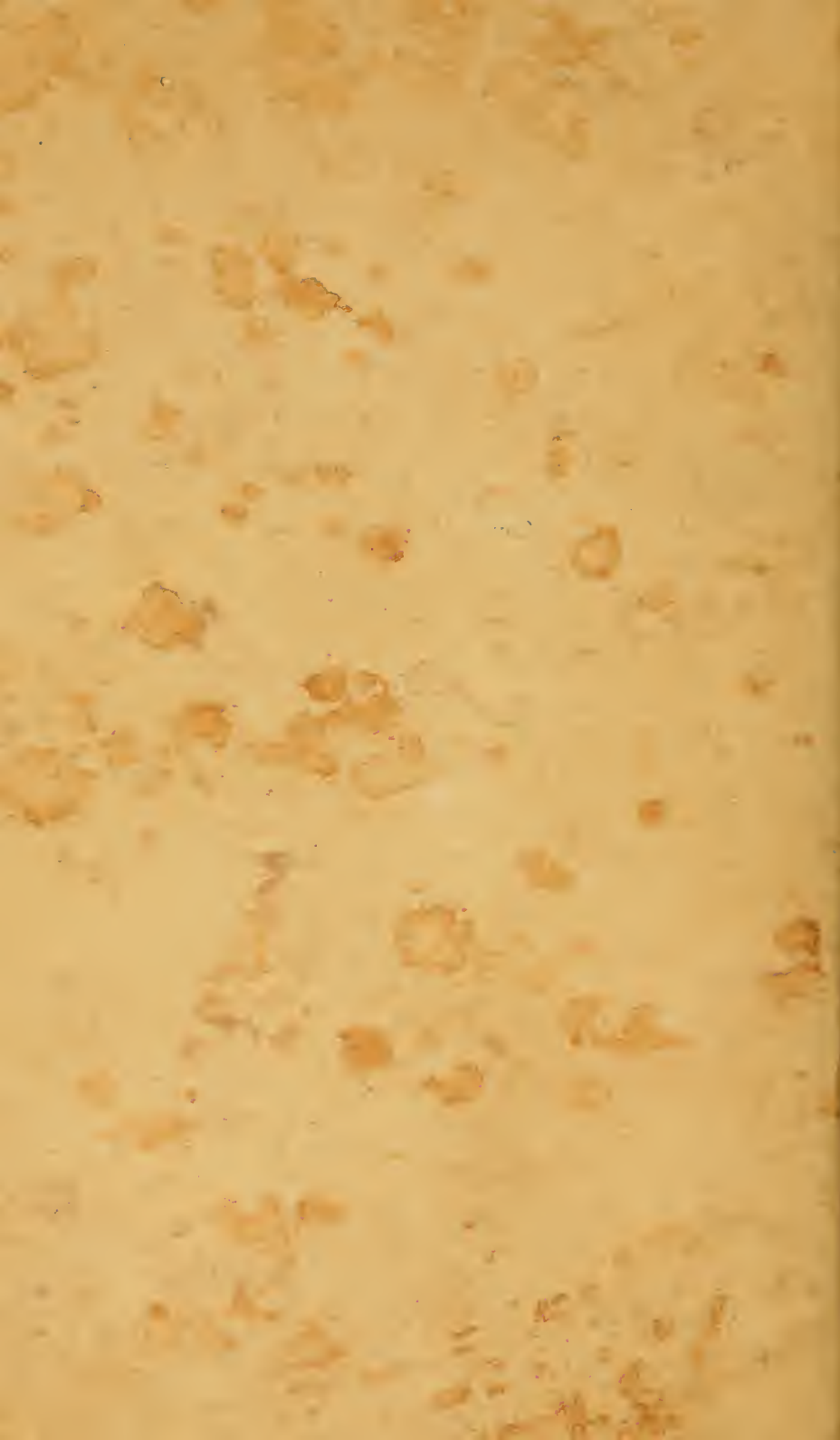
lize the Indians. Although I regard them as a totally distinct race from the agricultural tribes of this quarter of the world; as distinct as the Shepherd race of the plains of Asia from the noble Caucasian, I think that nothing should be left undone to ameliorate their condition; and earnestly hope, that the zealous labours of those men, who in the true spirit of Christianity, devote their time and talents to this laudable purpose, may be crowned with deserved success; and that

“The poor Indian, whose untutored mind,”

“Sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind,”

may be led into the way of truth, and enabled to perceive, that he whom he sees in the clouds and hears in the winds, is the fountain of wisdom and the source of every good and perfect gift, whose paths are the paths of peace in this world, and lead to the land of everlasting life in the world to come.





PRESIDING ELDERS

OF THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING CHARLESTON.

1786-87. Beverly Allen.	1831-34. Henry Bass.
1788-93. Reuben Ellis.	1835-38. Nicholas Talley.
1794-95. Philip Bruce.	1839-42. Henry Bass.
1796. Enoch George.	1843-46. Robert J. Boyd.
1797. Jonathan Jackson.	1847-49. Samuel W. Capers.
1798-1800. Benj. Blanton	1850-53. Charles Betts.
1801. James Jenkins.	1854-57. H. A. C. Walker.
1802-04. Geo. Dougherty.	1858-61. W. P. Mouzon.
1805-06. Britton Capel.	1862-63. F. A. Mood.
1807-09. Lewis Myers.	1864-65. Thomas Raysor.
1810. Reddick Pierce	1866-68. F. A. Mood.
1811-13. Wm. M. Kennedy.	1869-71. A. M. Chreitzberg.
1814-15. John Collinsworth.	1872-75. W. P. Mouzon.
1816-17. Alexander Talley.	1876-79. T. E. Wannamaker.
1818-19. James Norton.	1880-83. W. P. Mouzon.
1820-23. Lewis Myers.	1884-86. E. I. Meynardie.
1824-26. James O. Andrew.	1887-88. J. Marion Boyd.
1827-30. Wm. Capers.	

STATISTICS, 1887.

Trinity.....	local preachers, 2 ;	members, 555
Bethel.....	" 1 ;	" 328
Spring Street.....	" .. ;	" 292
Cumberland.....	" 2 ;	" 278
Totals.....	" 5	" 1,453

Trinity.....	officers and teachers, 58 ;	S. S. pupils, 401
Bethel.....	" 25 ;	" 194
Spring Street....	" 24 ;	" 150
Cumberland.....	" 35 ;	" 391
Totals....	" 142	" 1,136

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE HON. JOEL R. POINSETT, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Joel Roberts Poinsett was a descendent of one of the French refugees who came to Carolina under the Lords Proprietors soon after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. His father was a physician and apothecary, it being common then to unite the two occupations; and he was born in Charleston on the 2nd March, 1779.

He was taken to England during his early childhood, as soon as the war of the Revolution was over, and brought back in 1788. It becoming apparent then that he was of delicate constitution, and in order to give him the advantage of a change of climate, he was sent in 1793 to the care of the celebrated Dr. Dwight, of Greenfield Hill, Connecticut, who superintended his education for nearly two years. He was then returned to South Carolina, as the Northern winters were seen to be too severe for him.

After remaining a short time at his home, he was sent to England where he was placed at school at Wandsworth, near London, under the tuition of Mr. Roberts, a brother of the principal of St. Paul's school. He was naturally a bright boy, learnt rapidly from his books, and became a good classical scholar. After leaving the last school, at the age of eighteen, he went to Edinburgh, where he matriculated in its celebrated university, and attended the medical lectures.

The future of his life was much influenced by his stay at Edinburgh. It was an important intellectual centre, and most American youths who went abroad at the end of the last century pursued their medical studies at its university. He was naturally of an inquiring term of mind, desirous of accumulating knowledge, and he profited by his stay in the Scotch capital to inform himself upon other branches of science besides that of medicine. The foundations of the varied information on many subjects, which were one of the features of his character, were laid when there.

His studies were interrupted after about a year at the

university by a severe illness which made it necessary for him to make an ocean voyage to Portugal. The sea air was of great benefit to him, and, after a boisterous passage of four weeks, he landed at Lisbon, completely restored to health. In the Spring he returned to England, and finding that it would be impossible for him to follow a sedentary pursuit, he gave up the study of medicine and directed his attention to the study of military tactics, with the view of engaging in the active life of a soldier. For this purpose he placed himself under the instruction of Marquois, who had been a teacher at the Military Academy of Woolwich.

It is important to note these two facts: his taking an ocean voyage as soon as his health began to fail, which he continued until old age, and by means of which his life, which was frequently threatened, was prolonged to the age of seventy-two; and his having studied military tactics for his knowledge of what was necessary to make an efficient soldier was one of his strong characteristics in after life, and one of his great successes in the troublous times of nullification was the complete military organization which he gave to the Union party of Charleston, of which he was a conspicuous leader.

Under his teacher he studied the higher branches of mathematics, fortification and gunnery, but the following winter his health broke down again in the rigorous climate of London, and he returned to Charleston in the spring of 1800. The sea voyage again restored him before it was over, and he landed in good health.

Finding his father opposed to his entering the army in time of peace, he studied law for a few months, and being desirous of improving himself by foreign travel, he obtained the consent of his father to another European tour, upon which he started in 1801. The winter of 1801-2 was spent in Paris, and in the summer he visited Switzerland, making part of the journey on foot. From thence he went to Italy, Sicily, Malta, returned to Switzerland again, and then went through Bavaria to Vienna.

Mr. Poinsett usually had the best letters of introduction for the places to which he went, and he spent much of his

time at the Austrian capital in the company of distinguished members of the court. While at Vienna he received news of the death of his father, and started in the depth of winter to return to America.

Upon arriving in Charleston he found his only surviving sister suffering from an incipient consumption, and he took her to New York with the hope that her health would be restored. He was disappointed in this hope, for after lingering a few months she died in that city. His loss was a great bereavement to him and made a lasting impression upon his destinies and character.

He soon after returned to Europe, and proceeded to visit the northern portions of that continent. At St. Petersburg he was received in the most distinguished manner by the Emperor Alexander, with whom he enjoyed frequent intercourse. The Emperor delighted to inform himself on the Republican institutions of America, and on one occasion when Mr. Poinsett was speaking of the advantages enjoyed by the citizens of the United States, Alexander exclaimed: "Sir, you are right, and if I were not an Emperor, I certainly would be a Republican." He offered to retain Mr. Poinsett in his service, and afforded him every facility for his extended journey through the European and Asiatic possessions of his vast empire. This journey was a long and eventful one, and during its continuance he penetrated into Persia, Georgia, Circassia, the Crimea, and returned to St. Petersburg through the Ukraine and Moscow. There were many incidents, some of them dangerous, which occurred to him while on this trip; and although he made other journeys afterwards which were more arduous, the experience then gained as a traveller, capable of accommodating himself to all the exigencies which resulted from visiting wild and inhospitable regions, made him a person full of resource when surrounded with difficulties which would have been insurmountable to others.

After leaving Russia he found it necessary to visit Toepnitz for his health. On his way there he passed through Königsburg, where the Prussian Court resided while Berlin

was being occupied by the French after the battle of Jena. He also visited that capital and then proceeded to Dresden on his way to Carlsbad, finally reaching Paris, where he remained several months. He eventually returned to America in 1809—having been absent eight years.

The extended travels which he accomplished during those years, the distinguished persons whom he had met and his own observations or what he had seen and heard, made him a person of rare experience for his age, and, as he was ambitious and desirous of public employment, and had also paid special attention to military science, Mr. Madison, the then President, desired to make him Quartermaster-General of the Army.

Mr. Poinsett later on proved himself to be possessed of decided ability for organization, and he probably would have succeeded in introducing order into that department. It was a branch of the service very defective at that time—or a par in that respect with the other branches, and its share of the work during the war of 1812, which soon followed, proved that if the reforms could have been introduced in 1809, a part at least of the blunders in the management of the conflict might have been avoided.

The appointment was not made in consequence of the objections of Mr. Eustis, the Secretary of War, and Mr. Poinsett, having perceived that the Secretary was unwilling, accepted another offer which the President made him through Mr. Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury. It was to proceed to South America and ascertain the real condition of the South American people, as well as their prospects of success in the revolution just commenced.

He thereupon sailed for Rio Janeiro and proceeded thence to Buenos Ayres, where the governing Junta received him with great distinction. After establishing friendly and commercial relations with Buenos Ayres, he crossed the continent to Chile. This journey was another of those difficult undertakings which those who knew Mr. Poinsett and his continual condition of uncertain health, were surprised that he was able to accomplish. The pampas which had

first to be crossed are an arid plain during one-half of the year, and during the periodic rains of the other half are overgrown with a luxuriant vegetation. A heavy lumbering stage coach drawn by mules was the means of conveyance across this trackless waste, and upon reaching the base of the Andes, at a place called Mendoza, the journey over the mountain was made on the backs of mules. The number of days usually consumed in the trips from the City of Buenos Ayres to Santiago, the Capital of Chile, was from twenty to twenty-five.

Chile had not yet achieved its independence, and its government was in the hands of three brothers named Carrera, each one of whom was eventually captured, imprisoned and executed. They gave Mr. Poinsett a most flattering welcome on his arrival, and shortly after declared Chile independent of Spain. The country was divided into factions during the greater part of the war for independence which retarded its achievement, and the priesthood generally sympathized with the Spaniards who represented the old order of things. Fortune wavered from side to side during several years, and the yoke was not completely thrown off until 1818.

Mr. Poinsett remained principally in the seaport of Valparaiso and witnessed while there the engagement between the American frigate Essex and the two English vessels, Phœbe and Cherub. This occurred in March, 1814. The contest was an unequal one owing to the greater weight of metal of the English, and ended in the surrender of the Essex.

After the war with England of 1812 had commenced, he was anxious to return home, but their being no facilities at hand he was obliged to await an opportunity. In the mean while the British cruisers declared their intention to capture him if they could, and when Captain Porter obtained permission for his crew to return, Captain Hilber of the Phœbe refused him permission to be included in the cartel.

One of the most extraordinary incidents in Mr. Poinsett's life occurred while in Chile. During his detention there the

subject of declaring war against the United States was discussed in secret session of the Cortes in Spain, and the Spanish authorities proceeded to act as though war had actually commenced. They captured and condemned several American vessels, and upon their invading Chile they seized ten American whale ships in the Port of Talcahuano. At the same time Mr. Poinsett obtained the perusal of an intercepted letter from the Governor of San Carlos de Chiloe, informing the Viceroy of Lima that an American vessel had put into that port for supplies; that he had seized it and would send it on to Callao, the seaport of Lima, as soon as a set of irons was completed which was to secure the crew. Mr. Poinsett indignant at the commission of these acts of hostility on the part of the Spanish authorities, accepted the command of a small force which was offered him by the Revolutionary Government of Chile, with which he retook Talcahuano, and liberated the vessels detained there. The exploit exhibited his ability and courage in a striking manner.

He had been in the country long enough to be able to make an intelligent report to Mr. Madison of the state of things in Chile, and of the prospects of her independence. He thereupon returned to Buenos Ayres by the same difficult route that he had already taken. He then sailed for Bahia in Brazil, in a Portuguese brig, after having passed the British squadron in the river of Plate in an open boat. From Bahia he embarked for Maderia, and after a short residence in the island, he sailed directly for Charleston in 1816.

Soon after this he was elected to the State Legislature and he exerted himself successfully while there to induce that body to adopt a system of internal improvements. The journey from Charleston to Columbia before this was made by crossing the Cooper river, after leaving the city, at Clement's Ferry, six miles from the county Court House, and continuing through St. Thomas and St. John's parishes to Lenud's Ferry on the Santee river. After crossing, the traveller proceeded on the east side of the Santee and Wateree rivers to Statesburg, near which the Wateree was crossed at Garner's Ferry, twenty miles from Columbia.

Mr. Poinsett was made the president of the South Carolina Board of Public Works, and in conjunction with Colonel Blanding, he accomplished the important work of a good wagon road from the seaboard to the mountains. The building of this road through the upper parts of the State was costly, and remains to this day as evidence of Mr. Poinsett's energy and knowledge of what was absolutely required. The lower portion which was equally as important as the upper, was made practicable through the sandy regions by being corduroyed, and wagons loaded with cotton continued to pass over that road, always known as the State Road, until the railroads absorbed all the traffic for themselves. While occupied on this work he declined the offer of an appointment as commissioner a second time to South America, made him by Mr. Monroe.

It was common then for certain public enterprises to be started by means of a lottery. An authorization for one was easily obtained from the Legislature, and it was usually stipulated either that it would last a certain number of years or until a specified sum had been accumulated. Some churches in Charleston were built partly or entirely in this way, and it has only been since about the year 1840, or a short time afterwards, that they have been justly discountenanced as immoral and wrong.

Mr. Poinsett had observed in the cities of Europe the great usefulness of galleries of paintings and statues, their improvement and elevation of the tastes of the people, and with the hope of starting such an institution in Charleston, he obtained assistance from the Legislature in the shape of a lottery. The name of Academy of Fine Arts was given the new enterprise, and a small one-storied building was erected on the south-side of Broad street, between Friend and Logan streets, where some pictures were exhibited—among them Rembrandt Peale's Court of Death. These events occurred between the years 1815 and 1821. During the last year he was elected to Congress from the Charleston District, and his continued absence for some years was probably the cause of the Academy of Fine Arts having fallen through.

He served in Congress until 1825, and during that time, in 1822, he was invited by the President, Mr. Monroe, to visit Mexico and report whether it would be advisable to recognize Iturbide as Emperor. While in Congress he made a favorable impression as a public speaker, and was noted for the consideration with which he always treated the opinions of those who were his adversaries in debate. The recognition of the South American Republics was an important matter which came before Congress when he was in Washington, and he was able to give valuable information to those inquiring, in consequence of his stay in Chile.

His trip to Mexico is contained in a volume entitled "Notes on Mexico," published in Philadelphia and London, shortly after his return. The account of the journey is in the form of a diary which was written amid all the discomforts of travel in the Mexico of that day. He leaves Charleston in the Sloop of War John Adams, which stops for him off the harbor on the 20th August, 1822, and visits the Island of Porto Rico before reaching Vera Cruz, where he lands on the 18th October. His stay in Mexico lasted from that date until the 21st December, and, from the fatigue and inconveniences encountered, was another instance of his energy and determination when there was any purpose which he was bent upon accomplishing.

The country was found to be in a most disorganized state—highway robbery was common on almost all of the roads, and the few industries that could flourish were depressed by the anarchy that was chronic. In the City of Mexico he had an interview with Iturbide, which is described, and his opinion was that the Emperor could not be able to maintain himself long. He was right in that belief, for Iturbide abdicated the following May, having only reigned about a year.

He left the Capital, going North, and made a détour by the towns of Queretaro and San Luis Potosi, in order to visit a part of the mining region. The party suffered extremely from cold when the start was necessarily made

before day, the road being through the tableland of Mexico. His companions complained loudly of fatigue and remonstrated against setting out so early in the morning. He thereupon determined to go forward alone and engage the mules in advance, as it was important to reach Tampico in time to meet the sloop of war. The journey terminated at that city where the yellow fever was making its annual deadly visit, and he re-embarks on the John Adams off the port.

Before returning to the United States a few days were spent at Havana. Mr. Poinsett alludes with indignation to the impunity with which the pirates who infest the neighboring seas are allowed to occupy a suburb of the city, and are protected in their infamous occupation by the authorities of the island.

Iturbide having returned to Mexico in July, 1824, in consequence of an insurrection in his favor, Mr. Poinsett was urged by Mr. Monroe to accept the mission to that country. From the peculiar relations in which he stood with his party in Charleston, he was compelled to decline the appointment. Mr. Monroe afterwards renewed the offer; but Mr. Poinsett had defended Mr. Monroe's character when attached in the House of Representatives, and therefore refused to receive any appointment at his hands.

Although he had participated in the election contest in which Mr. John Quincy Adams succeeded, and had voted in favor of General Jackson, Mr. Adams proffered him the appointment of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico, which he at length accepted. Shortly before he set out for his destination the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by Columbia College in New York, together with Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Stephen Elliott of South Carolina.

His conduct while in Mexico, in the discharge of his official duties, was a subject of much criticism and discussion. The country was in a condition of continual turmoil, and Mr. Poinsett's efforts were always directed towards preventing civil war and protecting those whose lives in several instances would have been forfeited when the fortunes of war were against them.

His sympathies were naturally with the popular or democratic party, and he was therefore accused by the aristocracy and priesthood of intriguing against them. They hated him accordingly; believing that if they could be rid of him, they would regain their lost supremacy. The events that transpired after his departure must have satisfied them that he had been in no way concerned either on one side or the other with the conflicts that occurred. The European Spaniards, who accused him of being inimical to their interests, were forced to admit afterwards that, although he may have condemned their frequent interference in the politics of the republic, he constantly exerted himself to protect them from persecution.

Most of the incidents so far related in the life of Mr. Poinsett have been obtained from a sketch of his career in the volume of the "National Portrait Gallery" for 1834. The following incident which he related in a speech to the citizens of Charleston after his return, is copied *verbatim* from the same volume. It illustrates the power of the American Union to protect its citizens abroad. The election of Gomez Pedraza to the Presidentship of Mexico was not acquiesced in by the people, and from discontent and murmurs they soon proceeded to open revolt. At night they took possession of the artillery barracks, a large building commonly called the *Accordada*, which is so situated at the termination of the main street that a battery erected opposite to it commanded the palace. Near the *Accordada* is the *Alameda*, a public walk about three-quarters of a mile in circumference, and ornamented with noble trees. The action commenced here, after a vain attempt of the government to negotiate with the people. The government forces were driven out of the *Alameda*, and batteries established higher up the street. The second day the troops of the *Accordada*, commanded by Zavala and Lobato, advanced towards the centre of the city in two columns—one by the main street, and the other by a street running parallel to it, on which Mr. Poinsett's house was situated. In order to check the advance of these columns, the government troops

were posted in the towers and steeples of the convents and churches, and traverses mounted with cannon were constructed across the streets. One of these works was situated about three hundred yards from Mr. Poinsett's house, and immediately under the tower of a convent on which men were stationed. After several ineffectual attempts had been made to carry this work by an attack of infantry in front, suddenly a squadron of cavalry, that had succeeded in turning the flank of the battery, which was unprotected, came thundering upon the artillery and sabred the men at their guns. The soldiers on the tower, who for a time were afraid to use their guns lest they should kill their comrades, at length poured down an effective fire upon the cavalry. Several fell, some dashed down the street, and others threw themselves off their horses and took refuge under the eaves of the very tower whence this destructive fire had proceeded. The horses whose riders had been killed ran about wild with terror ; but those of the dismounted cavaliers instinctively leaned up against the wall of the tower as closely as their riders did, and both escaped the shots from above. When the cannon of the battery were silenced, the troops were soon driven from the convent. The convent of St. Augustine, situated in the rear of Mr. Poinsett's house, was the last to yield to the besiegers. While the firing was going on at this post, Madame Yturrigaray, widow of the former Viceroy of Mexico, who lived in the adjoining house, rushed into her balcony almost frantic with fear, and implored Mr. Poinsett to protect her house. While he was giving her assurances of protection and trying to calm her fears, a shot was fired at him from the roof of the convent opposite his house. The ball passed through his cloak and buried itself in the shutter of the balcony window. He retired within the house, and shortly after the besiegers were heard advancing. They were composed of the common people of the city and the peasants of the neighboring villages, mingled with the civic guards of Mexico and deserters from various regiments. The tramp of armed men and the hum of voices alone indicated their approach ; but when

they reached the house there arose one wild shout and a desperate rush was made to burst open the door. The massive gates resisted the utmost efforts of the crowd. A cry arose to fire into the windows, to bring up cannon, to drive in the door, and bitter imprecations were uttered against the owner of the house for sheltering their enemies—the European Spaniards, many of whom had sought an asylum in Mr. Poinsett's house. At this moment Mr. Poinsett directed Mr. Mason, the Secretary of the American Legation, to throw out the flag of the United States. This was gallantly done, and they both stood on the balcony beneath its waving folds. The shouts were hushed, the soldiers slowly dropped the muzzles of their guns which were leveled at the balcony and windows.

Mr. Poinsett seized the opportunity to tell them who he was and what flag waived over him, and to claim security for all who were under its protection. Perceiving that the crowd was awed and began to consult together, he retired from the balcony to dispatch his servant with a note to the commander of the besieging army. The servant returned and reported that the press was so great that the porter was afraid to open the door lest the crowd should rush in. Mr. Poinsett instantly resolved to go down himself and have the door opened. As he descended the stairs he was joined by Mr. Mason. They proceeded together across the court-yard to the door which the porter was ordered to open. As they stepped over the threshold the dense crowd which filled the street rolled back like a wave of the ocean. The servant, who was a Mexican, mingled with them, and before the people recovered from their astonishment the two gentlemen returned into the court-yard and the door was closed by the porter. Before they reached the front of the house they heard the rapid advance of a body of cavalry. It was commanded by a friend of the legation. The gates were thrown open, the horsemen rode into the court-yard, their commander stationed sentinels before the door, and Mr. Poinsett had the satisfaction to redeem his promise of protection to Madame Yturriagaray. Her house was re-

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spected during the wildest disorder, and those who had sought an asylum under the flag of the United States remained in perfect safety until tranquility was restored. The house was a quadrangle and the court-yard shut in by a *porte cochère*. The people before the door were many of them loaded with plunder from the houses and shops into which they had broken.

Mr. Poinsett's stay of eighteen months as Minister to Mexico was replete with incidents annoying to him. He was accused of having introduced masonry into the country, whereas it was well known that its rites had existed there long before he went. All that he did was to send for charters from the Grand Lodge of New York, at the request of the officers of the five lodges of the capital. He explained in this in an able reply to accusations made against him by the legislatures of Vera Cruz and Mexico, and afterwards in answer to a pamphlet published in London.

After undergoing an amount of hostility to himself, which amounted to persecution, and during which his life was in danger at times, he was recalled by President Jackson, who, in his next annual message, mentioned him in a complimentary manner. While Minister he negotiated a treaty of limits and one of commerce, which were not immediately ratified by the Senate, in consequence of a feeling of prejudice against him on the part of some of the members, but which was favorably considered after his return. The members of the legation and other Americans residing in the country who understood the conditions surrounding him vindicated and admired his course.

Soon after Mr. Poinsett had returned to South Carolina the nullification agitation commenced. It was caused at first by the Tariff Law of 1828, which imposed higher duties on certain manufactured articles from abroad, in order to encourage their successful manufacture in the United States. This was contrary to the opinions entertained by the public men of the South, and a large majority of the people, as to the rights of the general government. They thought that Congress had clearly the power to impose a tariff for revenue,

the proceeds of which were to be applied to the expenses of the government. But when it came to raising more revenue than was required, in order that certain industries, which could not successfully compete with foreign importations, might be assisted, those States whose industries were being developed without any outside assistance felt it as a grievance that this policy should be pursued.

South Carolina took the lead in this agitation, although all the other Southern States, except Louisiana, were equally interested. Her industries were entirely agricultural, and in consequence of the intelligent methods followed by the planters of the State, a variety of cotton grown on her sea islands, and known as "Sea Island Cotton," had been so much perfected in fibre that it had already taken the front rank in the markets of the world. Among the cereals, so decided was the ability of the rice planters, that that grain, which at first was one of the inferior varieties from the East Indies, had risen also to the front rank of its kind, and as "Carolina Rice," was everywhere known as the best that could be bought. These productions, along with the large upland cotton and tobacco crops, had never received any assistance in their infancy—the only yield of the soil which received a bonus from the government having been sugar. The South considered it unfair to be made to pay more for the English goods which it was in the habit of consuming, in order that the Northern and Eastern manufacturers might sell their goods at a profit.

The agitation continued without culminating in anything serious until the tariff of 1832 was adopted, which was as much protective as the first. Mr. Calhoun, who was then in the Senate, and exerted great influence in his native State, was in favor of the Legislature of South Carolina calling a convention to consider an ordinance which would nullify the two tariff laws of 1828 and 1832. The convention was therefore called, and in the fall of 1832 it passed the ordinance with instructions to the Legislature that it go into effect in February following.

The nullification party in the State did not outnumber

the Union party by a large majority, and the contest between the two became so bitter that at one time civil war seemed imminent. In Charleston the nullifiers were certainly the more numerous, but the Unionists had the advantage of better organization, and of the intention of the government to assist them.

Mr. Poinsett took an active part without hesitation in the controversy on the side of the Union, and soon became one of the leaders. He made a number of public speeches and wrote numerous essays to further the objects of his party, and the determination which he manifested himself and encouraged in others made his name conspicuous among those who were engaged in that memorable contest. His ability as an orator was great, and in the heat of the controversy his eloquence surpassed anything that those who had been his intimates had ever thought possible. His power for swaying the masses is considered by some of those who remember the times to have exceeded that of Mr. Petigru and Col. Wm. Drayton, two other leaders of the same party.

It is scarcely possible that Mr. Poinsett was in favor of a protective tariff. He was simply sincerely attached to the Union, and he could easily see that successful nullification would be the entering wedge of dissolution. He probably considered that it was better to remain in the Union, and put up with certain evils which are inseparable from all governments, than to separate and form weak confederations constantly at war with one another. He was sustained in this view by the miseries which he had seen the people of Spanish American States suffer while resident among them; and repeatedly while in conversation with friends he would allude to the want of prosperity in those countries, the result of misrule and anarchy. Mr. Poinsett was credited with having been the chief organizer of the Unionists in Charleston into a semi-military body. He had observed the preparations for civil strife in other countries, and knew the importance of discipline and organization. It has been stated too that such organizations became necessary in consequence of the nullifiers having first commenced theirs.

Whatever the truth as to this may have been, the superior organization of the Union men, under the management of Mr. Poinsett, was never more strikingly apparent than when the two parties came face to face one night, after each one had attended a public gathering in a different part of the city, and, to the surprise of the uninitiated, the Union men as they halted were found to be in military formation, while the other party were without order or discipline.

This was at the commencement of the agitation, and the only arms that the Union men had were clubs. They were provided with these as there were threats that their meetings would be broken up, and it was to prevent any such attempt that they were thus prepared. Later on the Nullifiers were uniformed as State Troops and frequently drilled, and their infantry and artillery were often seen in the public streets. It was then found necessary to give an equally efficient organization to the Union men, but this could only be accomplished by doing it secretly, as the Nullifiers were in possession of the State Government, and would have prevented any open drilling of their opponents.

In the City of Charleston it was doubtful at first which party was in the majority, and it was not definitely settled in favor of the Nullifiers until the annual election in 1831 for intendant. Great efforts were made by both sides and much excitement prevailed. The successful candidate was Mr. Henry L. Pinckney over Mr. James R. Pringle, who had been the incumbent the year previous.

At the time of the drilling of the Nullifiers in public and of the Union men in secret, it was said that Mr. Poinsett had received a commission as Colonel from President Jackson. This is not quite certain, but at any rate he was authorized to receive arms and ammunition from the government supplies in the harbor, and a certain quantity of both were sent from Castle Pinckney to the city, and quietly stored away by the leaders.

It can thus be seen that the situation was a most serious one. The division of families, on account of the various members holding different political opinions, was one of the

painful features of the agitation, and many of those who remember the period look back with horror at the extreme probability there was of bloodshed when the passions were at their height. The difficulty was finally settled by a compromise tariff introduced into Congress by Mr. Clay, which was adopted at the close of the session of 1833, and the impending conflict between South Carolina and the general government was thereby averted. It provided for a gradual reduction of the revenue and an abandonment of the protective system at the end of ten years. The victory for the moment was with the Nullifiers, and there was a general feeling of satisfaction on all sides that the crisis had been successfully passed.

To the younger generations who have appeared on the stage of life since the eventful period which has been briefly outlined, a word of explanation becomes necessary in order to clearly understand how the ideas of government, which would sanction the nullification of a law of Congress, considered by those aggrieved to be beyond the limits of its powers and therefore unconstitutional, were the accepted ones with one of the great dominant parties, which in its turn had held the reins of power. During the ten years that immediately followed the adoption of the present Constitution in 1787, there was a gradually increasing struggle in Congress between two parties—one of which known as the Federal party, under the leadership of Alexander Hamilton, was in favor of a strong centralized government; and the other known as the Republican party, under the leadership, although not continuously so, of Thomas Jefferson, was in favor of a general government with weak powers of cohesion, whose operations were to be limited to certain functions clearly defined, such as making treaties, coining money, levying duties on importations, etc. These powers according to the Republicans had been delegated by the several States to their common agent, the general government, and all the other powers of government were retained by them and known as reserved powers.

Although at the adoption of the Constitution, as might have been expected, nothing very definite had been settled as to what would be the character of the government, during the decade that followed the Federal party, having largely outnumbered the Republican party, had, through Congress, passed certain laws which proved that their tendencies were towards centralization. The Alien and Sedition Laws which were passed during the administration of John Adams, the second President, were the most conspicuous proof of the readiness of Congress to exceed the limited powers which the opposition considered had been conferred upon it. They had been adopted in consequence of the violent denunciations of the government by the friends and emissaries of France, which country, in the course of its war with England, was constantly violating American neutrality by insulting the American flag, capturing American vessels, and attempting to fit out privateers in American ports. Under the Alien Law the President could expel from the country any foreigner whom he deemed injurious to the United States; and under the Sedition Law any one libeling Congress, the President, or the government, could be fined or imprisoned. The measure was a most unpopular one and excited the bitterest hostility.

In consequence of the determined opposition to these laws, in October, 1798, while the Federal party was still in a large majority, two brothers of the name of Nicholas, one of whom resided in Kentucky, being on a visit to Jefferson at his country place Monticello, deliberated with him on engaging the co-operation of Kentucky with Virginia in "an energetic protestation against the constitutionality of those laws," as the "sympathy between" these States "was more cordial and more intimately confidential than between any other two States of Republican policy."

After much persuasion Jefferson was induced by the brothers to "sketch resolutions for that purpose," which George Nicholas, the Kentuckian, agreed to present to the Legislature of that State, upon this being done, and they were immediately adopted by an almost unanimous vote.

The authorship of the resolutions, which soon became famous throughout the United States as the Kentucky Resolutions, was not known until 1821, when Mr. Jefferson admitted having prepared them.

In December of the same year the Virginia Legislature, by an overwhelming majority, passed a series of resolutions similar to those of Kentucky. They were drafted by Mr. Madison, and were expressly to aid in making a stand against the usurpation of the general government.

The first of the Kentucky resolutions were as follows :

**Resolved*, That the several States composing the United States of America are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to their general government, but, that by a compact under the style and title of a Constitution for the United States, and of amendments thereto, they constituted a general government for special purposes—delegated to that government certain definite powers, reserving each State to itself, the residuary mass of right to their own self government: and that whensoever the general government assumes undelegated powers, its acts are unauthorized, void, and of no force: that to this compact each State acceded as a State, and is an integral party, its co-States forming as to itself the other party: that the government created by this compact was not made the exclusive or final judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself: since that would have made its discretion, and not the Constitution, the measure of its powers; but that, as all other cases of compact among powers, having no common judge, each party has an equal right to judge for itself, as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress.

The eighth resolution provides “that a Committee of Conference and Correspondence be appointed” to communicate the preceding resolutions to the Legislatures of other States, and after assuring them of the fidelity of this “commonwealth” to a constitutional union, to apprise them that it “is determined, as it doubts not its co-States are, to submit to undelegated, and consequently unlimited powers in no man, or body of men on earth: that in cases of an abuse of the delegated powers the members of the general government, being chosen by the people, a change by the people would be the constitutional remedy; but where powers are assumed which have not been delegated, a *nullification* of the act is the rightful remedy; that every State

*Randall's Life of Thomas Jefferson. Vol. II., p. 449.

has a natural right in cases not within the compact to *nullify* of their own authority all assumptions of power by others within their limits, etc., etc.

It will thus be seen that one of the cardinal principles of the Republican party, which was in power for forty years consecutively, and during the Jackson administration had changed its name to the Democratic party, was the right of a single State to nullify a law of Congress which that State might consider unconstitutional. So strong was the belief in this doctrine that when the first protective tariff of 1828 was adopted, the Legislatures of all the Democratic Southern States denounced it as an usurpation of power on the part of Congress. When however nullification was proposed as a remedy, South Carolina was the only State that was ready to go so far as to put the principle into practice.

This explanation as to its origin has been given in order to show that it was not started at the time of the passage of the tariffs of 1828 and 1832, and consequently the leading statesmen of the time, who favored it as a remedy for what they considered unconstitutional laws, cannot be accused of having originated it.

The condition of weakness in which the general government would have been retained by the universal acceptance of the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions as defining its powers, would soon have resulted in dissolution, and at this distance in time from the period in question, it can be seen that these resolutions were extreme and suited only to the emergency then existing. When the alien and sedition laws had been repealed or had expired by limitation, and the other obnoxious measures of the Adams administration had also been repealed soon after the inauguration of Jefferson as President in 1801, the tendency to centralization was effectually checked for the time being, and the occasion for the passage of those resolutions had ceased. They were found not to work well in practice, and Mr. Jefferson realized this in the Louisiana purchase and other events of his two terms of office; while Mr. Madison afterwards abandoned entirely the stand he had taken when he drafted the Virginia resolutions.

Mr. Poinsett considered himself a member of the Jeffersonian Democracy, but there being no other party in his State when he was elected to Congress in 1821, his defeated opponent was a Democrat also. He continued a Democrat through life, at the same time that he was an uncompromising Unionist, and, as he saw the crisis of nullification approaching, in July, 1832, he visited Mr. Madison at Montpelier, his country place in Virginia, for the purpose of conference with him. An interesting letter from the aged ex-President, written some months later is here given, as corroborating the statement of his having abandoned the stand of December, 1798:

MONTPELIER, October 16th, 1832.

DEAR SIR—I have received your favour of the 24th ultimo, and thank you for the pamphlets accompanying it, which are from very able pens: and I have just had an opportunity of reading your speech on the 5th inst. It is a powerful appeal to considerations which cannot fail to sink deep into every mind not shut against reflection by violence of party feelings. I wish for so opportune an appeal all the success it ought to have, in arresting a course of measures which lead to a result necessarily humiliating to the State, or ruinous to a political system justly deemed the hope of the world, and to which no State has heretofore been a more patriotic votary than South Carolina.

With great and cordial esteem,

JAMES MADISON.

MR. POINSETT.

The nullification period is interesting to look back upon as exhibiting one of the phases of the struggle which has been going on since the adoption of the Constitution of 1787, between the individual States and the general government. The latter, although completely checked at the time of the election of Mr. Jefferson, has since then gradually assumed powers which, it is considered, the original founders never intended she should have, and even New England was inclined to be rebellious during the war of 1812, owing to her shipping interests being affected by the blockade, the natural consequence of a state of war, and her exclusion therefore, commercially, from the ocean.

In 1832, a State, acting alone, still preserved some power, and, although the administration had made all the required

preparations for using the military on the side of its partisans, whenever it was thought that the time had arrived, and President Jackson, if he can be judged by his threats, was ready to use such harsh and autocratic measures as the spirit of the times would have utterly condemned, even in those States which most desired protection, it was too soon yet for musketry and the bayonet, or even for martial law and courts martial. Under the leadership of one of the great national statesmen, such a compromise was adopted as made it evident that the ruling majority felt that the time was not yet propitious for the grasping at more power.

That the situation was considered full of peril by the thoughtful statesmen of the time is proved by the action of Mr. Clay, who, in order to avoid the possibility of a violent conflict, sacrificed his chances for the Presidency by introducing the compromise measures, thus alienating the protectionists, and by the following letter from Mr. Webster to Mr. Poinsett, where he considers it important to so modify the tariff as to satisfy the Nullifiers :

BOSTON, May 7, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR—Events have changed the face of things, in some important respects, since the date of your letter to me, viz: March 25. We have passed the law for the better collection of the revenue, and we have at the same time removed the occasion for it, by such a modification of the tariff as the Nullifiers were willing to accept. I am anxious to know the effect produced by these occurrences in your State. Judging from the speeches in the Convention, from the tone of some of the papers, and, more than all, from a letter of Mr. Calhoun to some friends who had invited him to a public dinner, it appears to me that the contest is far from being ended. A repeal of the present law will be proposed, I doubt not, early next session, and a vigorous and persevering effort made to get it out of the statute book. This attempt will be made with the avowed purpose of repudiating the doctrines of the President's proclamation, and of extolling the principle that Congress cannot enforce any law which a State may decide to declare unconstitutional.

In short, my dear sir, I entirely concur in your views, as expressed in your letter, and think them substantially just, and applicable now, as well as at the time the letter was written. I hold it an indispensable duty of the friends of Union, everywhere, to exert themselves for its preservation, and to act in harmony and with concert. The fiercest of the battle has hitherto fallen on the Union party in your State. They have met the crisis with manliness, and patriotic spirit. They deserve all praise and all encouragement. On the

other hand the great majority of the people this way are ardently attached to the Union themselves, and feel a warm attachment for those who have elsewhere upheld its interests and fought its battles against such fearful odds. Let us cherish this spirit. Let us think and feel and act as if our interest and our duty were the same.

If I do not mistake, the question of paramount importance in our affairs is likely to be, for some time to come, *the preservation of the Union, or its dissolution*;* and no power can decide this question but that of the people themselves. Let the question be argued—let it be discussed—give the people light, and they will decide right.

I should be glad, my dear sir, to hear from you, and especially to learn, as before intimated, what is the tendency of public sentiment in South Carolina, since the events of the last session of Congress and the repeal of the ordinance. You have occasionally done your Northern friends the kindness to visit them in the heats of summer. Is it your purpose to repeat that the present year?

I am, dear sir, with true regard,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

Hon. J. R. POINSETT.

Another proof of the bitterness engendered by the nullification strife in South Carolina was that all of the leaders of the Union party forfeited their popularity by having taken that side, and Col. Wm. Drayton† determined not to remain any longer in his native State, although he was universally esteemed for his eminent ability and the purity of his character. He removed with his family to Philadelphia, and never returned to South Carolina. Mr. Poinsett, notwithstanding the loss of his popularity with the people, never forfeited the respect and confidence of his friends. His conduct throughout was highminded and honorable, and, although he was a trusted adviser of President Jackson, he was never suspected of having favored his extreme views. He was regarded by his opponents as one of the most conciliatory of the principal leaders of his party, and to have been anxious to avoid all approaches to a conflict. In organizing the Unionists in Charleston, his object was first to vindicate the right of public assembly, and then to show to the Nullifiers that, when it came to material strength, that of the Federal government far exceeded theirs. If the

* The italics are the writer's (Mr. Webster).

† A sketch of Col. Wm. Drayton will be found in O'Neal's Bench and Bar.

President had expected to use him for his purposes, he would have been obliged to find some other more pliable and less scrupulous tool.

The following letter of General Jackson, written long after nullification had become an event of the past, in reply to one which was apparently written for information as to what had been the President's intentions when the crisis should have arrived, would seem to prove that Mr. Poinsett never was a complete party to General Jackson's plans:

HERMITAGE, November 12th, 1844.

The Honorable Joel R. Poinsett:

MY DEAR SIR—Your letter of the 28th of October last is before me, and such is my debility and afflictions that I can scarcely wield my pen. But weak as I am, it is due to you that I should reply to it.

I have referred to Mr. Rhett's speech made at Macon, Georgia, to which you have drawn my attention. Mr. Rhett is certainly mistaken in his expressed views in that speech when he says: "I was directed to tell him (President Jackson) that whilst we were anxious to do our duty as good citizens of the Union, no known man could commit treason against his native State, and that, if he (I) intended to coerce the State, he (I) must make his own arrangement with that understanding." I cannot understand how the Union men could conceive that resistance to nullification and support of the laws of the United States, South Carolina being still a member of the Union and represented fully in Congress, could commit treason against the State by supporting the revenue laws of the United States. My understanding of the feelings and sentiments of the Union party of South Carolina in the then contest, were that they would not submit to nullification, but stood ready and prepared to aid the United States in vindicating the Constitution and laws of our country whenever required to do so, and did not regard resisting nullification as treason to the State. These were the sentiments of the leading Union men of South Carolina as I understood them.

I recollect that Mr. Rhett (then Smith) was introduced to me by you—that Mr. Rhett was anxious to know whether I intended to put down nullification in South Carolina by force. I was frank with him, and told him that in less than three weeks after the first overt act of treason was committed by the Nullifiers, I would invade the State with upwards of fifty thousand volunteers from the West, the North, and by water on the South side, etc. About that time General Coffee came in, who, I told Mr. Rhett, had volunteered to command the volunteers from the West, etc., etc. My strength fails me, I must close, and, having no amanuensis, I have to send it you without correction or taking a copy.

I trust in Providence that Polk and Dallas are elected, and corruption that has been spreading over our land will be put down forever.

With my best wishes for your health, happiness and prosperity, I remain
your friend,

ANDREW JACKSON.

The following letter from John Forsyth, of Georgia, afterwards Secretary of State under both Jackson and Van Buren, will show the limited extent to which nullification spread out of South Carolina :

AUGUSTA, GA., April 15th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR—The friends of your S. C. agitation are actively at work in this State. As yet their success has not been flattering. The recent elections for members of the State Convention to alter our Constitution have terminated happily. We believe the Union party will have a majority of more than 50 in that body. Here we have a tolerably organized party and eight or ten presses, and are ready to aid our friends in S. C. or elsewhere. In spite of their bluster, the alarm of your Nullifiers was sufficiently apparent, and their recent attempts to magnify their miserable escape into a triumph of their principles is pitiable in the extreme. Your good people must be egregiously besotted if they do not desert leaders who have thus humiliated a generous State. If your opponents are disposed to be quiet the Union party should not be: a revolution of such opinion with you will be conclusive elsewhere.

The politicians at the North give us nothing but good words, and I think we have a right to complain of the regulation of affairs at Washington. In the contemplated arrangements consequent upon the change of Livingston from Secretary to Minister to France, I am greatly mistaken if the South will not be totally neglected. Rumor says I am to be invited with the cabinet. *I know* there is no foundation for this "on dit," and have reason to believe that no one South of the Potomac will be selected. The effect of this neglect cannot be salutary. It will give our enemies more influence for working mischief. So far as I am personally concerned the decision of the President is right. In the present condition of things, in the Senate of the U. S. the administration must not weaken itself there. I confess that I do not perceive any reasonable cause for passing over this whole section of country and accumulating high offices in a more favored region. I speak all this in confidence, *as I am out of the question*. I may say that I think we should give our rulers to understand distinctly that this exclusion is considered both impolitic and unjust.

* * * * * If Colonel Drayton is in Charleston present my respects to him.

Very truly yours,

JOHN FORSYTH.

Hon. J. R. POINSETT.

Before dismissing the subject of nullification it should be stated that, notwithstanding its entire repudiation by so

many Southern men, including Mr. Madison, who had been one of its authors, the doctrine of the sovereignty of each individual State, with its delegated powers to the common agent, Congress, and its reserved powers for itself, remained the corner-stone of the doctrines of the Democratic party. The sovereignty of the States is repeatedly emphasized in resolutions adopted by Congress subsequent to nullification, and even General Jackson, strange to say, after his proclamation against nullification, maintained that an erroneous construction had been put upon parts of it, and that he still adhered to the principles of Mr. Jefferson as set forth in the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions.

So strong was the conviction of State sovereignty with the Democracy of the South, that, in 1860, when the crisis of secession seemed inevitable, it was thought to be so impossible for the general government to venture to coerce a State, that one of the leaders of the movement in South Carolina, when asked whether he did not think that bloodshed would be the result, replied that he could undertake to drink all the blood that would be spilt. Although with the Northern Democracy the feeling was not so strong, it was sufficiently so to have been the key to the vacillation of Mr. Buchanan during the last months of his Presidency. A consistent Democrat all his life, although from the strongly protective State of Pennsylvania, he did not feel that he could take any steps that favored coercion, and left the problem to be solved by his successor.

The more nullification is inquired into from behind the scenes, the more it becomes apparent that both sides were pleased at its peaceful termination. The stand taken by President Jackson against it and his well known imperiousness, made it clear to the Nullifiers that it could not be consummated peacefully, and the intimates of Mr. Calhoun, who, of all others, has been held responsible for the movement, have always asserted that he never contemplated either war or disunion. At the same time it was evident to the other side that if coercion was attempted there was no telling how far resistance might spread. There were many

offers of assistance, in case of a conflict, made to the authorities of South Carolina from the surrounding States, including Tennessee, the home of Jackson; and, upon considering seriously his threat of invasion with 50,000 volunteers, in the short space of three weeks, it can easily be seen that such a feat would have been beyond the powers of the general government. There was no previous preparation, and but few railroads then for the rapid transportation of troops; but, even with the odds largely on the side of the government from the division into parties of the Southern States, the thoughtful statesmen of the period could not but be alarmed at the possibilities of the conflict.

Mr. Poinsett's home had always been in the city of Charleston until his retirement from public life. His residence was situated upon what is now Rutledge avenue, on the east side, a few squares above Calhoun street. The house was a plain wooden one, with columns in front, and it had somewhat the exterior appearance of a small church. It was recessed some distance from the street, and stood in the midst of a grove of live oaks; it was generally known as "Poinsett's Grove," and it had probably been a farm before the city limits extended so far.

From his long residence abroad he was of polished manners and fond of society. While occupying this dwelling after his return from South America, and between his return from Mexico and his appointment as Secretary of War, it was noted for the graceful manner in which its hospitalities were conducted. There was no display, but an amount of quiet good taste in the entertainment of his friends, which was remembered long after. His winters and springs were always spent there, and his summers usually in travel, to the springs of Virginia, Saratoga, and New York city in the fall.

His mind was always active, and, notwithstanding the numerous adventures of his life and his long residence amid the stirring events of other countries, he did not experience the ennui which affects most men under similar circumstances when the time for their retirement has arrived.

There was generally some branch of science which occupied his thoughts; and, during the period to which we are referring, he was the friend and intimate of the Reverend John Bachman, a distinguished naturalist of the time. Dr. Bachman assisted Audubon by his observations upon many of the birds described in his great work on the birds of North America, and was the principal author of the second work upon the quadrupeds of North America, the illustrations for which were made by Audubon and his sons.

Mr. Poinsett was well informed upon both zoology and botany, and had observed the animals and plants of those countries which he had visited. The reverend naturalist therefore found him a congenial companion, and there was much intercourse between the two. The writer, when a boy of twelve, accompanied Mr. Poinsett and one of his friends, on a visit to Dr. Bachman, who lived then in Rutledge avenue also. He can well remember the intelligent interest he took in examining the various animals and birds scattered about in cages and running partly domesticated through the garden and yard. It was in the month of June, and in the early spring Dr. Bachman had vied with two of his neighbors as to who would succeed in raising the greatest number of ducks. One of the incidents of the visit was the witnessing the arrival of a great number of the young birds from the large mill pond at the rear of the lot, and the pell-mell way in which they scrambled over each other in their struggles to reach the poultry house for the night, proved that the traditional Chinaman with his whip, to punish the last duck for being tardy, was not wanted.

Mr. Poinsett was rewarded for the interest he took in science by having a beautiful flower named after him. It was described by two botanists, Wildenow and Graham, without its being known exactly which one had priority. The first called it *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, and the second *Poinsettea pulcherrima*. It belongs to the family of *Euphorbiaceæ*; is a native of Mexico, and was discovered there about the year 1828. There is some difference of opinion as to whether Mr. Poinsett discovered it himself or simply

introduced it to this country. At all events it is always known now as being named after him.

There were other scientific subjects also in which he took an interest. When in Mexico, and while stopping at the Island of Porto Rico on his way there, he collected a number of stone implements and rude sculptures, with specimens of pottery, etc., which he brought back with him ; and on his return divided between the Philosophical Society of Charleston and the Society with the same name of Philadelphia. Those in Charleston are still preserved in the College Museum, and they prove to be quite valuable as illustrating some of the conditions of life in the early periods of man's civilization. At the time that these things were collected there was scarcely any interest taken by the scientific in man's half civilized state in America, and but few could see that they were worth the trouble of preserving. Since then anthropology and ethnology have become important sciences, and collections of man's early implements are valuable as exhibiting his various stages of progress. Those made by Mr. Poinsett are from tropical regions, and they prove by the careful finish of many, as compared with those from regions out of the tropics, that in warm latitudes during the stone age, as was also the case in the ages of iron, man improved himself more rapidly and founded empires, while the rest of the world was still steeped in barbarism.

In a short published paper on certain discoveries of ancient Etruscan pottery near Rome, Italy, Mr. Poinsett treats intelligently the subject of the similarity between the early efforts at architecture and design of the Jews, Egyptians and Etruscans. The pyramidal character of their mounds and other primitive structures have been thought by some to prove a common origin. Mr. Poinsett observed while in Mexico, the likewise pyramidal shape of many of the ancient remains, especially those near Teoleohuacan on the plains of that country, which are inferior in size only to the pyramids of Egypt. He is not of the opinion that this similarity of shape indicates a common origin, but thinks that it proves that the mind of man, as he emerges from a

barbarous or semi-civilized state, makes use of the same modes of thought and copies in his rude way his natural surroundings in improving his architecture. The vases described were part of the Canino collection which he saw in London, and he considered them more perfect than those in the celebrated Naples collection. The forms of the vases were graceful and the figures exquisitely finished. He alludes to the difficulty of deciphering the writing on these vases, and states with regard to certain tables of brass which are preserved in the town of Gubbio, Italy, that, although savans have thought that they have been successfully translated, they have really only been interpreted. The Etruscan hieroglyphics at the time Mr. Poinsett wrote were still an unsolved mystery.

In the Summer of 1816, after his return from South America, Mr. Poinsett while in Philadelphia proposed to three young men from Charleston, whom he met there, to accompany him on horseback on a tour to the West. The party was soon made up and they left Philadelphia on the 29th August, followed by a light wagon for the baggage. One of the young men kept a diary of the journey, which is still in existence, and from which the following extracts are made: The passage through Pennsylvania was quite uneventful. The weather was very rainy and the roads in bad condition in consequence. The number of miles per day varying from eighteen to thirty. While passing over the Alleghany Mountains the travellers were shown a small log hut where dwelt General Saint Clair, a Revolutionary General who had served with honor during that war. In 1791 he had been disastrously defeated by the Ohio Indians, under circumstances which were considered as exonerating him, and he was entirely vindicated by a Committee of Congress, which, after a thorough investigation, declared him free from blame. He was obliged afterwards however in consequence of his defeat to resign his public position, and in 1802 he retired to this retreat, where he spent the rest of his days in poverty, vainly endeavoring to effect a settlement of his claims against the government. The party after

some hesitation decided to alight and visit the old hero. They found him an aged man of over 80 years, with no companion to cheer him in his solitude, but, like a venerable oak, still standing bravely against the storms of life. The visit was a brief one, with little conversation, on account of the age of General Saint Clair, and the sight of the old man excited the deep sympathy of the party for his unmerited fate.

They arrived at Pittsburg on the 16th September. This town, with a population of 10,000, was already quite manufacturing, and steam was at that early day almost exclusively the motive power in use. There was a flour mill and a paper mill, a cotton and woolen factory, a wire and nail factory, three extensive establishments for making steam engines, three rope walks, at one of which the principal part of the cordage for Perry's fleet on Lake Erie had been prepared, an iron rolling and slitting mill, and a glass factory which was already turning out very creditable work. These were only the principal industries of that already thriving place. There were an equal number of other factories of minor importance which need not be mentioned in detail. There were six or eight steamboats lying idly at the wharves, and, upon inquiry it was ascertained that for some reason, which was not yet understood, they had not been successful. One was being built under the supervision of a practical and experienced machinist, who was having the engine made at his works, which was expected to be more of a success. The atmosphere of Pittsburg was charged with smoke and cinders from these various factories, exactly as it continued to be for years afterwards until the discovery and utilization of natural gas.

Mr. Poinsett was a good mentor for his youthful fellow travellers, and it was by his advice and in his company that Pittsburg was so thoroughly explored. His experience as a traveller was opportunely at hand at this stage of the journey. The horses had not been shod before starting as there were no macadamized turnpikes to be travelled, only ordinary dirt roads, and when passing over the Alleghany

Mountains the horses' hoofs became so much worn by the rocky ground, that it was found upon reaching Pittsburg, that, unless some expedient could be devised for continuing the journey, a delay of several days to rest the horses would be unavoidable. Mr. Poinsett, while searching for a remedy to this awkward state of things, found that a great deal of produce was usually shipped to various points down the Ohio river in flat-bottomed boats, a large number of which were annually built for the trade. They were very roughly put together, and were only intended for the trip down the river. Upon reaching their destinations, they were only fit for fire-wood, and generally sold for that purpose, or simply abandoned on the bank. They looked like large floating boxes, so destitute were they of every appearance of naval construction. He decided to buy two of these boxes, each one twenty-two feet long by eleven feet wide, and, after having a plank floor laid in one for receiving the horses, they were lashed together and thus floated down the stream. Both boats had roofs to them, and the one containing the travellers was provided with the necessary crockery and cooking utensils, so that the trip down the Ohio, with the beautiful autumnal scenery of each bank, was a delightful episode.

There was already a stream of emigration moving towards what was called the back country, and using the river as a highway. In some cases a man and wife and some children were seen working their way down the river in a canoe, and there were numerous illustrations observed of the hardy character of the pioneers. At a place called Marietta on the Ohio bank, the travellers resumed their horses, and explored the country as far as Cincinnati, passing through Chillicothe, which they found the most beautiful town of the many which they visited. Game was very abundant in every direction, and several wild turkeys were killed. Cincinnati was already a flourishing town of 12,000 inhabitants, not as manufacturing as Pittsburg, but with every indication of future prosperity. It contained the best tavern at which they lodged since leaving Philadelphia.

The party divided at Cincinnati as Mr. Poinsett wished to go a short distance into the Territory of Indiana, and one of the young men accompanied him. The other two crossed the river into Kentucky, and proceeded to a point called Limestone, where they had directed the boatmen to await them at the landing. The crew of three sailors were then discharged, and the yawl was given to them, as it was their intention to go as far as New Orleans by water. The two boats were then sold for fire-wood, and the crockery having been given to the servants, they immediately disposed of the whole to the highest bidders among the group of idlers who had been attracted to the river by the unusual arrival. The entire party then met again by previous agreement at Lexington, Ky. This was already a flourishing place in the midst of a beautiful and fertile country, with many pretty country-seats in the environs. It was the home of Mr. Clay, with whom Mr. Poinsett was already acquainted. His dwelling was in the suburbs, the embellishments of which and of the grounds proved him to be a man of taste. Mr. Clay was then on the high road to national eminence, having lately been one of the negotiators of the treaty of Ghent. He had recently passed through an election for Congress, his opponent being Mr. Pope. Mr. Clay lost quite a number of votes on account of his having favored at the last session a bill to increase the pay of a Congressman from \$6 per day to \$1,500 for the session—a sum that seemed monstrous to the Kentuckian of that day. Both the candidates spoke in turn at country meetings from the same cart, and, notwithstanding Mr. Clay's unfortunate vote for the pay and mileage law, he won the election easily by his superior eloquence. All four of the travellers were invited to a large dinner party at Mr. Clay's, when fifteen guests sat at table. These were prominent citizens of the place, and the foot of the table was occupied by Mr. Joseph Hawkins, a former member of Congress, and a gentleman of varied information.

When Mr. Poinsett made the short trip into Indiana, he stopped at a Swiss settlement on the Ohio river, where a vineyard on the European plan had been started. The

place was named Vevey, and he had been so much interested in what he saw there, that, while at Lexington, he advised the two others to visit it also, as neither had yet seen a real vineyard. They accordingly proceeded to make the visit, and every thing that was observed is mentioned in detail in the diary. The entire party then met again at the Mammoth Cave, which was carefully explored. Before leaving Lexington Mr. Poinsett was invited by a previous acquaintance, who was the owner of a model stock farm, to pay him a visit, and he returned much pleased with what he had observed. The cattle were as fine as any that he had ever seen in England. Another historic character who was met at Louisville, Kentucky, was General Lefebvre Desnouettes, one of Napoleon's officers, who had fled from France after the defeat of Waterloo. He was on his way to New Orleans with the intention of joining the patriot side of the war for independence in some one of the South American States, and he expected Marshal Grouchy* to join him there. General Desnouettes had been a good deal in Philadelphia, where one of the young men had made his acquaintance.

The journey was continued from the Mammoth Cave to Nashville, Tenn., where Gen. Andrew Jackson was met, and with whom the party breakfasted, and thence over the Cumberland Mountains into Western North Carolina. From there into Northwestern South Carolina, finally reaching Charleston early in November—the entire distance travelled being 2,100 miles. It was probably Mr. Poinsett's first opportunity of seeing the necessity of the highway through his own State, which he soon after advocated in the Legislature, and successfully accomplished. This long journey was another proof of Mr. Poinsett's indefatigable nature. From Philadelphia to Pittsburg it rained almost the whole time, and the roads in some places were almost impassable. The discomforts then experienced did not appear to disturb him, and he continued throughout the trip on horseback with the others, as though he was possessed of the

* Neither of these officers went to South America.

same youthful and robust frame. Upon arriving in Greenville, S. C., he was informed that he had been elected to the Legislature from Charleston, and he proceeded to Columbia to attend the session.

After a retirement of a few years, after 1833, Mr. Poinsett again entered public life as Secretary of War in the administration of Mr. Van Buren. This lasted for four years—from 1837 to 1841. It was the great opportunity of his life, for his original devotion to the study of military science, and his observations of the military establishments of European governments during the active period of the Napoleonic wars, enabled him to act intelligently in his recommendations for the improvement of the various branches of the service.

He is considered by competent critics to have been one of the ablest and most enlightened of the many heads of the war department. After the war of 1812 the necessity for reorganizing that department in consequence of its many shortcomings was so patent that it was undertaken and successfully carried out by Mr. Monroe as soon as he became President, through his Secretary, Mr. Calhoun. The reforms were mainly administrative, and enabled the Secretary to better control all military operations in case of another war. Nothing apparently was done to modernize any of the arms, and, when the Van Buren administration was inaugurated, the arsenals probably contained much of the old material that remained from the war of 1812. None of the young officers had seen anything of field service except against the Indians, nor had any of them had the opportunity of observing in Europe the new improvements in the various arms of the soldier. As soon as the Secretary could make the necessary arrangements, he sent in 1839 the three cavalry lieutenants, W. Eustis, H. S. Turner and Phil. Kearney, to the cavalry school of Saumur in France, where they remained a year, by permission of the French government. Kearney was afterwards allowed to visit Algeria, where he witnessed some of the active operations then being conducted by the French under Marshal Bugeaud, for the conquest

of the country. Kearney afterwards distinguished himself as a captain of dragoons in Mexico, and while in command of a division of cavalry in the army of the Potomac. The following year, 1840, three ordnance officers were sent to Europe to observe and report upon the improvements in cannon and other arms. These were Major Rufus L. Baker and Captains Alfred Mordecai and Benjamin Huger. They were accompanied by Mr. Wade, a practical cannon founder, who had been an ordnance officer of the army. The results of their recommendations after their return were that, although in the light batteries, the calibre was not increased, for it was before the improvement in field pieces instituted by Napoleon the Third, by which rifling of the guns was practiced and the weight of the projectile increased, the service of the field guns was rendered more efficient, and in the first encounter of the Mexican war, at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, in May, 1846, the skillful handling of a light battery under Bragg, which discharged grape with great effect, and was easily moved from point to point, was a conspicuous event of those two days.

Mr. Poinsett, although no longer Secretary, was particularly gratified at the news of artillery having been so effectively used in deciding a battle, and before his feelings of pride at realizing that he was entitled to some of the credit had subsided, he wrote a letter to one of his old friends and political associates in Charleston, the now venerable Mr. Ed. McCrady, which the latter has frequently mentioned as having been "like the blast of a bugle"—so exultant was he at the news.

The sending of those officers to Europe, which was exclusively a thought of his, ranks him as a far-seeing and able man. War at present is eminently a progressive science. Improvements in arms have caused many changes to be necessary both in attack and defence. Mr. Poinsett was in advance of his time in recognizing the importance of giving intelligent young officers the opportunity of seeing the innovations which were desirable, and of abandoning the old routine. It is singular that so many Secretaries followed

each other without apparently giving a thought to the necessity of thus keeping the army informed as to the progress which was going on elsewhere.

While Secretary, in the year 1840, he recommended that Congress give pecuniary assistance to the various States for the better organization of their militia. In response to a resolution of the House of Representatives, March 9th of that year, requesting that he communicate his plan in detail, he submitted a full and elaborate report, covering seventy pages. The proposition encountered the determined opposition of most of the States, who objected to the general government stepping outside of its powers and interfering with their domestic concerns, and therefore it never proceeded further than to be received as information.

Mr. Poinsett was severely criticised at the time for not having better understood the temper of the people than to recommend so soon after nullification a step towards centralization, which was even more decided than protection. It must be explained, however, that the militias of most of the States had been suffered to sink into a state of great inefficiency after the events of 1812, and it was for the public good that his recommendations were made. He probably did not expect any other reception by Congress of his report than the one it received.

During the last year, 1841, of his residence in Washington, he delivered by invitation a "Discourse on the object and importance of the National Institution for the Promotion of Science." This society had been recently organized, and he was its first orator. The discourse is a carefully considered effort, and the ground he takes as to the duty of the government to collect at the national capital everything that could be of value for the promotion of science and art, shows that he was in favor of concentrating at Washington all the facilities for information and study that are to be found in the old capitals of Europe.

Now that so much has been done in that direction by the creation of the astronomical and geological bureaus, the Smithsonian and National Museums, with the many valu-

able and scientific publications of the Interior Department, and of the Smithsonian Institution, which have contributed so much to diffuse useful knowledge throughout the civilized world, there would seem to have been no doubt as to the propriety of Mr. Poinsett's recommendations. But the Washington of 1841 was a city utterly destitute of such advantages; for it had not yet been the policy of any of the dominant parties to develop it into anything more than a place for the President to live in and for Congress to deliberate.

There were a few hotels, it is true, and a number of boarding houses, for the accommodation of the Congressmen, but as late 'as 1850, about ten years after this period, so few were the dwelling houses that could be rented by any one of ample means who desired to make Washington his residence, and entertain his friends in a manner becoming his wealth, that there were but few inducements to entice as residents any persons who were not connected in some way with the government. No effort had yet been attempted to suitably exhibit the few collections which had so far been made, and it seemed doubtful whether the boxes containing the results of the Wilkes' exploring expedition would be allowed to proceed beyond Philadelphia—there being no place in Washington for even housing them. Mr. Poinsett in his address enumerates the sciences of astronomy, geography, natural philosophy, natural history, geology, mineralogy, chemistry, the application of science to useful arts, agriculture, American history and antiquities, literature and the fine arts, as subjects which it will be the province of the National Institution to investigate.

It is interesting to read this list, as at the present day almost every one of the sciences mentioned has a permanent home in Washington, and the arts of sculpture and painting can be included, through an abiding place having been created for them by the munificence of a private individual. In the absence of any rival claimant for priority in recommending that the society he addresses occupy itself in fostering a desire for these sciences to be represented at the capital, Mr.

Poinsett is justly entitled to the credit of having been the first to make such recommendations in a public address.

Mr. Poinsett had a large foreign correspondence, and received many letters from Lafayette. They were mostly written from Paris, and many are to introduce to him, while in Mexico, some friend of freedom, who has become obnoxious to his government and is necessarily obliged to leave. Mexico appears to have been considered then as offering inducements to those who were either forced to expatriation or were interested in some commercial venture.

The following two letters, written, as they all were, in English, will serve as types of the rest :

PARIS, October 5th, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR—This letter will be delivered by M. Theubet, a Swiss by birth, late Lieutenant-Colonel of the French service—a relation to Bureau Puzy, one of my two fellow prisoners at Olmutz. The respectable widow of my companion in captivity and other persons of the family have affectionately recommended him to me, and, as he is going to Mexico, I cannot render him a better service than by this introduction to your kindness and good advices. He is considered as a good officer and deserving gentleman, and I cannot but be pleased with an opportunity to become somewhat useful to a cousin of Bureau Puzy.

I came here on a visit to M. Jallasia, who came for a few days to Paris, and am returning to-morrow to la Grange¹, where I will be happy to hear from you.

Most truly and affectionately,

Your friend,

LAFAYETTE:

You will have before this received a petition for your being pleased to send some Mexico Hullahs², with an instruction to domesticate them, if possible, on my farm of la Grange.

LA GRANGE, August 7th, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR—Captain Bachi, a native of Parma, lately of ex-Empress Maria Louisa's guard, has lost both his commission and his country on account of his liberal opinions, and has entered the line of trade. He is warmly recommended to me by the Neapolitan General and patriot Pepe and by some other friends of freedom, Italians and French. As he is going to Mexico, they have requested a line of introduction to you, which I give with pleasure in behalf of Captain Bachi, at the same time that I like this additional opportunity to see you hear from

Your affectionate friend,

LAFAYETTE.

1. Lafayette's country place near Paris. 2. A Mexican bird.

Mr. Poinsett's fortune, as has already been stated, was small, and, in some way which has never been explained, towards the close of his official life, it was suddenly and irretrievably lost. He had never yet married, but soon after his retirement, he determined, notwithstanding his age, to try a change in his surroundings. The lady whom he married was of the Izard family of South Carolina, and had been for many years the widow of Mr. John Julius Pringle. His choice was in every way a happy one, and he had the satisfaction of being able to prove that, even in things matrimonial, he was possessed of the same excellent judgment that had always characterized him. His wife was the owner of a valuable rice plantation near Georgetown, S. C., and there for the rest of his days, he spent all of his winters. Some of his summers were then spent at Greenville, S. C., where they owned a farm, and occasionally they went to the North for the fall months.

It was natural for his active mind to be interested in rice culture after he had become a resident of the region in which the grain was cultivated. Its quality had been brought to great perfection around Georgetown, S. C., and, through the system, which had been introduced in its cultivation, and the skillful use of water for irrigation, as well as the careful selection of seed, the variety known as "Carolina rice" had become the choicest and highest priced in the markets of the world. He made many trials of other crops than rice to perfect some system of rotation by which the fertility of the soil might be maintained. It was a difficult problem, and one that was never solved. But he was here again in advance of his neighbors in seeing that, unless some system was adopted, the production of rice from those rich alluvial soils so admirably adapted to its cultivation, would be so much reduced in quantity as to cease to be a wealth-creating industry.

It can easily be seen, after this survey of Mr. Poinsett's career that, although he was a Democrat in politics, he did not belong to the States Rights school of Mr. Jefferson. It has been impossible to see any of his letters or the published

speeches which he delivered at various times which would throw some light upon his opinions as to the relative powers of the general government and the individual States. He was abroad so much during his youth and early manhood that he imbibed different views of government from those prevailing among the public men of the South who were his cotemporaries, and the centralized governments of the Old World, from having been observed at those impressionable ages, must be held responsible for his having adhered through life to a belief in the necessity of sufficient power at Washington to prevent disintegration. As a Southern statesman he was therefore isolated and alone, and, it must be admitted, his eminent qualities were never properly appreciated by his native State.

He was noted for his courteous manners, combined with much modesty and simplicity. His dress and appearance were generally different from those of other persons living in Charleston, and, whenever in the spring and fall he was seen in the different thoroughfares of that city conversing with his friends, he could always be singled out as one who had lived abroad more than at home.

With regard to the subject of slavery—while he was in active political life its agitation had not assumed proportions alarming to the South. After his complete retirement in 1841, he had become pecuniarily interested in the profits of slave labor, and during the decade that followed he must have had occasion frequently to turn his thoughts uneasily to the possible magnitude of a struggle which, it did not require a prophet to foretell, was inevitable. His last thoughts were for a perpetuation of the Union, and at the time of the adoption of the compromise measures that followed the acquisition of California, when there was much dissatisfaction in some of the cotton States, at the South being excluded from the new territories, he wrote a letter to the *Charleston Courier*, deprecating the movements in South Carolina that contemplated disunion. This was his last appearance before the public, but in a private conversation with the late Mr. James B. Campbell of Charleston, at about

that time, while referring to the possible consequences of the anti-slavery agitation, he suggested that the future would be more reassuring if the South would consent to liberate the slaves, provided the Federal Government would agree to pay for them. This would have been an opportunity to test the sincerity of the North, and it would have been interesting to observe the amount of willingness they would have manifested, when called upon to put their hands in their pockets, in order to rid the country of what they considered a hideous crime.

The solution of the problem must have appeared difficult to Mr. Poinsett, for the cultivation of rice which occupied his best thoughts at this time, was essentially based upon the ownership of the labor and its complete control. The industry was an important one along the seaboard of the three States of North and South Carolina and Georgia, and it had been transferred from what were known as the "inland swamps" to the alluvial soils of the tide regions of the many rivers of those States. The reclaiming of those lands from daily overflow could only have been accomplished by cheap African labor. The fever producing character of the region prevented the employment of any other; and had it not been that there was a servile class at hand, which was obtained from the malarial regions of equatorial Africa, it is perfectly certain that no other industry could have flourished in those vast cypress swamps but those of the lumberman and the hunter. The reclaiming of those alluvial lands had exercised the best energies and intelligence of the planters, and so great always was the risk of crevasses or breaks in the large embankments bordering the rivers, that each plantation was like a separate fort, requiring as a garrison a well disciplined force, ready, at the word of command, to move against the besieging waters.

Although the area of rice culture in South Carolina was small, the planters exerted considerable political power. This was owing to the peculiar Constitution of the State, by which the numerous parishes into which the seaboard counties were divided, were each allowed one State Senator and

one or more Representatives; while in the interior counties only one Senator was allowed to each county. The rice planters were generally large slave owners,* and the grain having sold at paying prices during the European wars at the beginning of the century, they were able to purchase largely from the slave ships during the concluding years that the trade was allowed. They consequently, while on their plantations, were a few white families in the midst of many thousands of blacks, and, when the agitation of slavery was at its height, and other raids like the one at Harper's Ferry were clearly in the future, with the probable massacres of whites which would accompany them, they looked with alarm at what they could plainly see was in store for themselves.

Their intense longing then was for an ending to the agitation, and, seeing no prospect of its being reached except by separation, the representatives of the parishes, which included in their limits the agricultural products of rice and Sea Island cotton, which last also employed a large slave population, always exhibited by their votes in the Legislature a greater leaning towards disunion than those from the interior counties. The parish system, as it was called, was probably in large measure responsible for the secession movement in South Carolina, as was the opinion of Governor Perry of that State, who, through life, was an opponent of both nullification and secession; but the reason for the desire for separation, as evinced by the votes of the parish representatives, becomes clear, when the isolated condition of the planters of the seaboard and their families is explained.

Mr. Poinsett was obliged, after having become identified with an important planting interest, to be more conservative in his views. He fully realized the strong feeling against slavery at the North and in Europe, and we know to what an extent this feeling was intensified by the publication of Mrs. Beecher's novel, which was after his death. But he could not lose sight of the fact that the slaves were property

* Nathaniel Heyward and Gov. Wm. Aiken, both rice planters, owned, the one 2,300 and the other 800 slaves.

which had been honestly paid for, and by means of which the South had attained prosperity. After the severities which had been necessary to tame the savage spirits of some of the recently imported, the generations of blacks that followed were a docile and, with some few exceptions, a humanely treated race; as was incontestably proven by their large increase while in bondage. But in view of the aggressive character of the agitation at the North, which, it will be remembered, had arrested in its inception an earnest effort in Virginia some years previously to inaugurate emancipation, in which Mr. Poinsett had doubtless sympathized, he, with a large number of other intelligent slave owners, who were ready to admit that slavery was not in keeping with the times, were obliged to turn a deaf ear to the headlong and vindictive philanthropy of the period, and Mr. Poinsett, as a statesman, would do no more than state in private what he thought the remedy might be, without urging in public any measures for emancipation which he could not commend to the self-respect of the South.

He is represented to have been of great conversational powers, and to have been able to add interest to what he was saying by his observations as a traveller. Journeys were such undertakings in his day that, having been alone in most of his travels, he could relate adventures that had occurred to him and facts as to foreign countries which some might think bordered on the improbable. This made him cautious in alluding to incidents which were in any way out of the ordinary, and he once advised a young friend, who afterwards became an extensive traveller also, to be careful in general company not to relate either an incident experienced, or a fact observed during a journey, which might tempt a listener to accuse him of exaggeration.

It has already been stated that Mr. Poinsett was in delicate health all of his life, and to the very last he believed in the efficacy of travel, especially of an ocean voyage, as soon as disease began to encroach. When remonstrated with once by a medical friend who had examined him, and advised to give up a contemplated journey on account of its

risks, he replied: "Whenever I see disease approaching, I retreat from it," and he could not be persuaded to alter his plans. His hold on life was extremely doubtful at eighteen and twenty, but by incessant care he prolonged it to over seventy years.

He died at Statesburg, S. C., December 12th, 1851, and here also his belief in the efficacy of travel as a means of warding off death was shown. He had returned to his plantation in November, and, when seen in Charleston ten days before, he was unmistakably approaching his end. After a few days at the plantation, finding that he was getting worse, he again resorted to his favorite, and so far, unfailing remedy; but the insatiate archer would no longer be baffled, and, after a short journey, full of discomfort and pain, he reached in his carriage the little town above mentioned, and there was finally gathered to his rest.



